A

Second Volume

OF

DISCOURSES,

THE

CONTENTS of which follow in the next Leaf.

BY

HEZEKIAH BURTON, D.D.
Late Rector of *Barns* near *London*,
and Prebendary of *Norwich*.

LONDON;
Printed for Richard Chiſwell at the Roſe and Crown in St. *Paul's* Church-Yard. MDCLXXXV.

A

Second Volume

OF

DISCOURSES,

THE

CONTENTS of which follow
in the next Leaf.

BY

HENRY BURTON, D.D.
Late Rector of Barnes near London,
and Prebendary of Norwich.

LONDON:

Printed for William Gilbertson at the
Hole and Crown in St. Paul's
Church-Yard. MDCLXXXV.

AN ELENCHUS OF THE Several Diſcourſes in this VOLUME.

OF *Walking Exactly.* *On* Epheſ. 5. 15, 16, 17.

Of Redeeming the Time. *On* Epheſ. 5. 16.

Of Underſtanding the Will of God. *On* Epheſ. 5. 17.

Of the Advantages of Chriſtianity. *On* Epheſ. 3. 16.

Of Loving our Enemies. *On* Mat. 5. 44.

Of

Of calling no Man Maſter. On Mat. 23. 8, 9, 10.

Of Inordinate Deſire or Coveting. On Rom. 13. 9.

Of Doing our own Buſineſs. On 1 Theſſ. 4. 11.

Of Studying to be Quiet. On 1 Theſſ. 4. 11.

Of Education. *On* Prov. 22. 6.

Of Hoſpitality. On Rom. 13. 12.

Of Doing Good to All Men. On Gal. 6. 10.

ERRA-

ERRATA.

PAge 124. line 3. for τῆτα read τῆτο.
P. 137. line 9. after *betwixt* a Comma.
P. 184. l. 4. r. *quas & cæditius gravis invenit & Rhadamanthus.*
P. 190. l. 3. for *be* read *he.*
P. 193. l. 5. for *curiously* read *cursorily.*
P. 217. l. 31. dele *them.*
P. 224. l. 4. for *altogether* read *all together.*
P. 256. l. 8. read ἀπερίβατον.
P. 362. l. 31. for *your* read *the.*
P. 426. l. *ult.* for *others* read *our selves.*
P. 434. l. 10. read *be blessed.*
P. 448. l. 27. read *on them.*
P. 468. l. 30. for *should* read *shall.*
P. 490. l. 4. for *certainly* read *certainty.*
P. 517. l. 10. for *I intend*, dele *I*, and read *intend.*
P. 524. l. 30. for *that all* read *that of all.*
P. 536. l. 3. read *is.*
P. 558. l. 21. read *Mens.*
P. 556. l. 13. for *dress* read *dross.*
P. 574. l. 33. dele *inflaming our heavines.*

Books

Books lately printed for RICHARD CHISWELL.

THE Works of *John Lightfoot*, D. D. late Maſter of *Katherine*-Hall *Cambridg*, in 2 Vol. with uſeful Tables to the whole, *Fol.*

The firſt Volume of Dr. *Burton*'s Diſcourſes, of Purity and Charity, of Repentance, and of ſeeking firſt the Kingdom of God, 8°.

Several Treatiſes and Sermons of *William Falkner*, D.D. 4°.

An Explication of the Creed, by *Gab. Towerſon*, D. D. *Folio.*

Dr. *W. Cave*'s Sermon before the King, *Jan.* 18. 168$\frac{4}{5}$.

A Diſcourſe concerning the neceſſity of Reformation, with reſpect to the Errors and Corruptions of the Church of *Rome*, 4°

A Diſcourſe concerning the Celebration of Divine Service, in an unknown Tongue, 4°

The right Notion of Honour, A Sermon preached before the King at *New-market*, by *Nath. Vincent*, D.D. with Annotations, 4°

De Legibus Hebræorum & earum Rationibus libri tres, Authore Joanne Spencero, S. T. D. Fol.

A DISCOURSE OF *Walking Exactly.*

EPH. 5. 15, 16, 17.

See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as Fools, but as Wise, redeeming the Time, because the Days are Evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the Will of the Lord is.

I Will first give some account of the Words, and then proceed to that which I intend to make the Argument of my further Discourse.

The Particle οὖν, which we here render *then*, and in other Places *therefore*, seems to

refer us to what went before, and ſhews that the Text has ſome Connexion with, or Relation to it. It ſeems to be a Repetition, and ſummary Comprehenſion, and it may be a farther Enforcement of the foregoing Exhortations.

See then, or *therefore*, *how ye walk circumſpectly*, i. e. accurately, or exactly [πῶς ἀκριβῶς.]

This exact Walking is here partly explained, and partly commended by the following Expreſſions [*Not as Fools, but as Wiſe*,] i. e. Not as the *Gentiles*, but as thoſe who are enlightned by the heavenly Wiſdom of our Saviour; not as Infidels, but as Chriſtians.

The other Expreſſion, which I take to be a particular under, or a means of this general walking exactly, is *redeeming the Time*, i. e. Seaſon or Opportunity, which is time of acting, the beſt of time.

This is the literal rendring of the Original Words, but probably it does not altogether reach the Sence of that form of Speech in the *Greek*, and other Languages.

In *Dan. Chap.* 6. *Verſ.* 8. *Nebuchadnezzar* blaming the *Caldeans*, that they did not tell him his Dream, which he had forgot, as well as the Interpretation, which, they ſaid, was not to be expected from any Man, but only the Gods that dwell not in Fleſh: He would not admit of the Excuſe, but tells them, *I know that ye gain time*, οἶδα ἐγὼ ὅτι καιρὸν ὑμεῖς ἐξαγοράζετε. Which is paraphraſed by *Grotius*, *moras quæritis*, *Ye delay*; agree-

agreeably to that Expreſſion in the following Verſe, ἕως ἂν ὁ καιρὸς παρέλθῃ, *Till the Time be gone*, or *paſs away*, i. e. you by Delays hope to get advantage, and contrive ſomething to impoſe upon me, and to ſave your ſelves from the Puniſhment, which I have decreed, ſhall be inflicted on you. In which reply he refers to the Delay, whereby they hoped to ſave themſelves from Danger.

This ſeems to be the Senſe of this form of Speech in *Daniel*. Let us alſo conſider it in almoſt a parallel place to my Text. *Col.* 4.5. *Walk in Wiſdom towards thoſe that are without, redeeming the time*, i. e. as I conceive, by all lawful and prudent means avoiding thoſe Evils, and declining thoſe Dangers, with which the Times threaten you.

And in my Text, the reaſon which follows, ſhews that this is much of the Senſe of theſe Words here: *Redeeming the time, becauſe the days are Evil*, i. e. taking all wiſe and honeſt Courſes, whereby ye may eſcape the many Dangers of which your days are full.

Nazianzen ſays of *Julian*, ὁ μὲν ἐξωνούμενος τὸν καιρὸν ἢ κρυπτῶν ἐν ἐπιεικίας πλάσματι τὸ πανοῦργες, where his buying or redeeming of time is explained by his cunningly concealing his ill-Diſpoſition under the diſguiſe of Gentleneſs.

Thus then, He that by care and contrivance ſo accommodates himſelf to the Times, ſo manages himſelf that he may eſcape the danger and avoid the evils of the Times; and not only ſo, but ſerves himſelf of them, and turns them to his advantage:

He is ſaid to buy or *redeem the Time* in the largeſt import of that Phraſe.

According to this, It is a form of Words that may ſignify either good or bad, as the matter is which is joyned with it. He that baſely and cowardly declines dangers which he is obliged to encounter: Or, He who dexterouſly ſtrikes in with the Times, to do any ill things, or to neglect his Duty, may be ſaid ἐξαγοράζεσθαι or ἐξωνεῖσθαι τὸν καιρὸν, as was ſaid of *Julian* the Apoſtate. When a Man does unhandſomly comply with the Times, and diſhoneſtly catch at, and lay hold of every advantage to ſave himſelf, tho it be to the betrayi g of his Countrey, or the renouncing of his Religion, he may be ſaid to redeem the time.

But the Apoſtle does not uſe the Phraſe in this Senſe. For by it he intends no more than that in all prudent and honeſt ways, they ſhould decline all the Inconveniences, and ſhun the Dangers of which thoſe Times were ſo full; whereby they ſhould be hindred, or taken off from doing the good which they ought: And that they ſhould uſe all honeſt Care, and prudent Circumſpection, in cloſing with thoſe fit ſeaſons they might meet with, of doing that which by their Religion they were obliged unto.

The following Reaſon which the Apoſtle uſes, confirms this to be his Senſe. *For the Days are Evil.* *Evil*, i. e. in the largeſt Notion of that Word, as it denotes Sin, as well as the Miſery that is conſequent upon it: difficult, perilous times. Therefore be wiſe

wiſe and careful to avoid the Danger, to decline the Temptations, to ſhun the Diſadvantages, to lay hold on the few Opportunities which ſuch *Evil Days* afford.

To this he ſubjoins the laſt Clauſe, which contains the Direction to, and implies the neceſſary Cauſe of all that he had required before. And this is propounded in form of an Exhortation.

1. Negatively and Generally. *Be not unwiſe or Fools* [ἄφρονες.]

2. More Particularly and Poſitively. *But underſtanding what the Will of the Lord is.* Underſtanding [συνιέντες] the Word ſignifies an exact Knowledg, ſuch as is got by comparing one thing with another.

For this Cauſe that ye may *walk circumſpectly*, declining the Diſadvantages, and eſcaping the unneceſſary dangers of the *Evil Times* in which we live, be not without underſtanding; but endeavour after a very perfect Knowledg of *what the Will of the Lord is.*

Having given this account of the Words, I ſhall offer the Senſe of them in this ſhort plain Paraphraſe.

That ye may behave your ſelves as becomes *Children of Light*, and not be partakers with Infidels in the *unfruitful Works of Darkneſs*, *&c.* Be very accurate in your Lives, and in all your Actions, as becomes thoſe that are endued with that divine Wiſdom, that certain and excellent Knowledg which with our Saviour came down from Heaven.

Live not like thoſe who are uninſtructed in, and unacquainted with the excellent Religion of the Bleſſed Jeſus. And altho the Times in which you live be full of Evil, tho you meet with Temptations to Sin, and be environed with danger of Suffering; tho you find many hindrances, and few helps to do well; yet be wiſe and dexterous in declining all needleſs fruitleſs Dangers, eſcaping the Evils, and cloſing with the Opportunities you ſhall have. And that you may be better aſſiſted for, and in the doing all this, that you may be thus exact in your ſelves, and prudent in your Carriage in reference to the Times; inform your ſelves fully *what the Will of God is*, get as certain knowledg as you can of what ever God has commanded, or would have you do.

The Words contain many Propoſitions: But I ſhall only inſiſt upon thoſe for the matter of my Diſcourſe which ſeem to be moſt expreſs, and to take in the main ſcope of the Text.

I ſhall reduce them to theſe three.

I. All Chriſtians ought to live exactly.

II. They ought to make the beſt of bad Times when they fall into them.

III. They ought to uſe their beſt endeadeavours *to underſtand what the Will of the Lord is.*

Of

Of the First Proposition.

I. Christians ought *to see, to take good heed* that they live exactly.

In discoursing of which, I shall

First, Shew what it is to live Exactly. And *Secondly*, What Obligations lie on Christians to live so, and to take heed to it. *Thirdly*, I shall give some Directions. And *Lastly*, Make some Inferences.

First, *To walk Exactly*, is to use due Care and Caution, Circumspection and Diligence, that we live according to the best and most perfect Idea of good Life. Ἀκρίβεια seems to signify this. It may refer to to the thing done, and then it denotes the perfection of that work: Or to the Doing, or Doer; and then it means his Care and Diligence. It often bears a respect to both, and signifies the care that is taken in order to the doing any thing as well as it can be done. So that by this we are at once directed to the End, and to the Way or Means by which it is to be attain'd. The End is a perfectly good Life: The Way to it is by a diligent Care.

Now, as 'tis commonly said that to live, signifies more than doing some single Action; so I must say that 'tis more than all our Actions. For, as it is requisite to make the whole, not only that all the parts be there, but they must be united too: So 'tis

in the matter before us. To make up a good Life, the Actions muſt not only be good ſingly and by themſelves, but in that Relation, Proportion and Order, which they have unto each other.

So that in ſhort, *To walk*, or live exactly, is to take care that the whole courſe of our Life be ſuch as it cannot be better, omitting nothing that is Good, doing nothing that is Evil; that we do thus univerſally, at all times, in all places, whatever we do that reſpects God, or our Selves, or our Brethren. That our Actions be in nothing deficient, neither as to Matter or Manner, as to the Principles, the Reaſons and Ends of them. That in all theſe reſpects they be exactly agreeable to human Nature in general, to our Condition and Circumſtances in particular; that is, that they be as good as ſuch Men as we are can do.

If any enquire yet more particularly what a perfectly good Life is? I may anſwer, that as the Apoſtle here ſuppoſes it, ſo may I ſuppoſe that all Men know it. All Men have an Idea of Goodneſs, which upon ſeveral Occaſions they take notice of, and refer to; as when they approve and commend, or blame and condemn ſeveral Practices. And whenever they hear ſuch a deſcription of good Life as they underſtand, they give an immediate aſſent to it. But becauſe in too many this Idea is not ſo actually obſerved, as it would be well if it were; that I may raiſe thoſe Thoughts, and help to make them more explicit, I will propound this general Deſcription

deſcription of it, *viz.* When a Man's Will and Affections, and all his Actions, are ſo guided by a true, and clear, and large knowledg of God, and himſelf, and the reſt of the World, that he loves God with all his Heart, and bears good-will to other Men, as he does to himſelf; that he glorifies God, and promotes his own and his Brethrens beſt ſtate in all he does, and the moſt he can; And does all this knowingly and intentionally, or with the deſign of doing it. This in general every one will think a good Life: I muſt not go on to Particulars. Theſe are ſome of the moſt eſſential parts of that Life which the Apoſtle requires an exactneſs in, *i. e.* that Men ſhould aim at the perfection of it; and in order to this, that they ſhould take great care and pains, that they ſhould mind it, and give good heed unto it.

Secondly, I proceed to ſhew, why Chriſtians ſhould take ſuch care to live ſo very exact lives. There are many things which ſhew this to be good, and fit, and neceſſary for Chriſtians; which I ſhall briefly propound.

1. We have an excellent Rule of Life made known to us; ſo that if we will correſpond with it, we muſt live Exactly. We have the knowledg of thoſe Laws, which direct and oblige us to the moſt perfect Life, which reach to our inward Motions, as well as outward Actions: Some of which are Univerſal, and to be obſerv'd by us in all we do. Such are the Love of God, and of our

our Neighbour, and of our Selves, in subordination to the Love of God. Others are our Directions in particular Cases and Relations, if we be Superiors or Inferiors, Masters or Servants, Parents or Children, or Friends; or if we meet with Enemies, and suffer from the hands of Men unjustly.

We have all this plainly declared to us in express words. We are not then to live as those who are left to meer Probabilities, and uncertain Conjectures, or obscure Reasonings of what is good and fit to do in divers Particulars. God has indeed, in various ways, shew'd to all Men in the World what is good; but none of them have so clear, certain, full a discovery of it as the Christian. And because we know our Duty better than others, is it not to be expected that we should do it better and more exactly than they?

2. We have also an Example of the highest perfection; and this challenges our imitation. The Heathens have had very good Copies set them by vertuous Men which God raised up amongst them. The Jews had their first Founder *Abraham*, and divers others who walked in the steps of his Faith, to conduct them in the Ways of Holiness: But, alas! how short are all these of the Son of God, who is our Example? What a Pattern of Life has he set us?

And when we have such a one going before us, by his Practice directing, and by his Authority confirming and engaging us, How incongruous is it, that we should be

short

ſhort and defective, that we ſhould write ill after ſo fair a Copy, and wander out of the Way when we have ſo good a Guide?

3. It appears not only fit, but juſt and neceſſary, when we conſider that every Chriſtian has obliged himſelf to live by this exact Rule, to follow this moſt perfect Example.

We have all, by our Baptiſmal Vow, bound our ſelves to live exactly. We have declared, That we will forſake the Devil and all his Works, *&c.* Now then, if we will be true to our Promiſe, not break our Vow which we have ſo ſolemnly made unto God, in the Congregation of his People, we muſt live exactly. By Baptiſm we have entred our ſelves into the Inſtitution of the greateſt Perfection; the Deſign of which is, to make us perfect.

4. Chriſtians know that they muſt give a ſtrict account of their Lives before an Impartial Judg, that they muſt render a Reaſon of all their Actions to one that is inflexibly juſt. And ſurely they that know this, ought to be very exact in their Lives, that they may be ſo in their Accounts of them.

5. The Chriſtian has ſuch extraordinary aſſiſtances above others, that it is a ſhame for him not to live better than they. The whole Goſpel-Revelation is far beyond what the reſt of Mankind have. The ſecret, but moſt powerful Aſſiſtances of the Divine Spirit, which are conveyed to our Minds by being converſant in the Chriſtian Doctrine, enable

ble us to live far better than other Men: And if we do not, we are greatly wanting to God's Grace, and to our ſelves, we receive his Grace in vain.

6. This is the ſure and only way to perfection. If we would ever in God's eſtabliſh'd Methods arrive at that, we muſt ſtrive to be exact, to do as well as we can, ſo as we cannot mend it. For Man by doing his beſt, enlarges his Power, and ſo advances ſtill higher, till he has attain'd to his utmoſt pitch.

Thus it is with us in other Matters; by Actions we acquire Habits. The more accurate our Performances are, the more earneſt and diligent we are; and the more we exerciſe our ſelves, the farther do we advance our perfection. This then is the uſual, the ſure, and I may add, the only way to it. Thus in matters of Trade, Apprentices and Learners are firſt inſtructed what it is they are to aim at, and then perſwaded to induſtry and diligence; and that whoever fully comprehends that which is to be done, and diligently intends and purſues it, he will not fail of arriving at great maſtery. So 'tis in the Buſineſs of Learning: He that has a clear and adequate *Idea* of what it is, and is diligent in the Exerciſes that he is to do towards the attaining it, ſo as to do his beſt, and continues ſo, he will not fail to be a good Scholar. In like manner, he that well underſtands the good, the perfect Way in which he ſhould walk, and uſes his utmoſt endeavour to act and live according to that know-

knowledg, he will in due time attain to as great perfection of goodneſs as is poſſible for him.

Thus, as many *as would be perfect*, muſt walk in this perfect Way, the Way that leads to Perfection. And let as many as would be happy, *be thus minded*. For, Perfection is the greateſt and the moſt eſſential part of Happineſs.

7. For a farther inducement to this, I may add, That as no Man can be perfect, who is not thus affected; ſo 'tis queſtionable whether he can be truly good or not, and aſſure himſelf of his own ſincerity, who is not thus minded. For how does he love Goodneſs truly, and as he ought, who does not prefer the greater Good before the leſs, who does not ſtrive after more of it, and go on towards perfection, who does not aim at the beſt? Upon this account, a late excellent Author † of our own, has put it into the very definition of Vertue, *conſtantly to follow that which is beſt*. According to this, unleſs we aim at being perfectly good, we are not truly ſo.

† Dr. *Henry More*, in his *Enchirid. Ethic.*

The ſum of what I would ſay is, That there are in the Goſpel ſuch, ſo great and plain diſcoveries of God, of our ſelves, of the ſtate and condition of Men, what it is, was, will be; of the true happineſs and greateſt miſery of Man; of the way to both: that to be in the natural and beſt uſe of a Man's ſelf; to be moſt affected with, and to have a principal regard to God; to be juſt and charitable to all Men, this ſeems the

the natural result, and genuine issue and tendency of such Knowledg: and to do otherwise, would be to act against it, that is, it would be an unnatural violence to our selves.

From all that our Christianity informs us in, and directs us unto, we come to understand, that a good Life ought to be every Man's principal Care and Business; and that both because nothing is so considerable, and of such importance; so profitable, so necessary, as it is to live well: As also because this cannot be done without great care and diligence.

There is, first, great care to be taken, and pains to be used, that we may come to an exact knowledg of what *that Good is which we are to do all the days of our Life.* It is not so very easy to be out of all doubt, whether this or that particular Action be good singly, but much harder to know this, if it be compared with others, and with relations to them: And yet more difficult to have a certain knowledg and setled judgment of all the good which ought to be done through the whole course of Life: To retain and remember it, requires farther care; and it will cost us still more pains to bring our Wills into subjection to it: And to keep them thus subject, will be farther work. He that will do all this, must be very watchful over himself, observe all his Motions, curb and restrain his Appetites, and call all those Motions to account, which will not stay for the direction of his Reason.

He

He muſt guard himſelf from all Temptations from abroad. In ſum, He muſt be on continual Exerciſe, and in the conſtant uſe of Underſtanding, and very intent, who preſerves himſelf in that due compoſure of Mind, and temper of Body, which makes him capable to do good univerſally. If he be either ignorant, or miſtaken, or doubtful, or unreſolved; if he be forgetful, or inconſiderate; if he be but inadvertent, and incogitant for a Time, or be averſe, and uninclined; which may happen through a natural Temper, an inveterate Cuſtom, a preſent Diverſion, or many ſuch Cauſes, he will omit the doing good. And how hard is it to prevent all theſe things?

How diligent then muſt he be, who at all times, in all caſes, knows what is good and fit for him to do, and who wills what he knows, and does what he wills? He muſt not only conſider himſelf, but others, nor only Men, but God alſo, if he will fully underſtand and wiſely judg what is good; and that not only in general, but in every Inſtance. Nor muſt he only barely ſuffer himſelf to do what he knows to be good, but alſo actively determine himſelf from an inward approbation of what is good. And the Will muſt be ſo effectual as to ſet the inferior Powers to work. And will all this be done without great Care, without great Attention and Intention of Mind?

And as this Care and Diligence is neceſſary, ſo it is alſo effectual. As Men cannot live well without it notwithſtanding all the other

other helps they have; ſo if they be indeed watchful and careful how they live, they will not fail to come to great exactneſs in Well-doing. Which I thus make out.

All Men in the World are endowed with the knowledg of ſome Good, ſome Virtue or other: And if a Man well and carefully attend to that, it will by that Cognation which is between all Virtues, by good Conſequence, by Parity of Reaſon, ſome way or other lead him to the knowledg of more, and by degrees of all the great and more illuſtrious Goods. And the practice of any one Vertue will afford him ſuch Delight and Satisfaction, that it will naturally diſpoſe him to repeat the ſame, and to ſeek after other Inſtances wherein he may have the ſame Pleaſure; and he will be greatly inclined to keep his Mind in the ſame State and Exerciſe, whereby he will be excellently diſpoſed and enabled for the ſearch after all other things that are good, both to judg truly of them, and to will and do all that he thinks Good.

I need not ſay how great the advantage of the Chriſtian is in this matter above what all other Men can pretend to. For he has thoſe ſure Oracles which inſtruct him, where Nature and unaſſiſted Reaſon would have left him ignorant, or miſtaken, or doubtful.

He that lives in the Chriſtian Church, and joyns himſelf to the Aſſemblies of Chriſtians, and will but open his Ears to hear, he can't but underſtand in ſome ſort that it's good for him *to do juſtly, to love Mercy, &c.* He can't but think it reaſonable he ſhould do ſo alway. And

And that good Spirit of Truth and Holiness, which moves upon our Minds, and inspires with Wisdom, and always strikes in with good and hearty Endeavours, is ever ready to give his assistance to lead us into Truth, *To work in us both to will and to do what is good.* This he does certainly and constantly to them who set themselves seriously on the search after Knowledg, and who are in good earnest careful *to work out their Salvation.* Insomuch that no Man who has used care and diligence in this, has ever been left destitute of the divine Assistance.

He who is no where wanting to hearty Desires, and careful Endeavours after Goodness, will not absent himself from his own Institutions; but will make them effectual for the Ends to which they are ordained.

When we see the great Attainments of *Socrates*, and other Heathens, and what Heights of Goodness they rose to by the assistance of the divine Spirit, when yet they had not our inspired Writings, and Records of exemplary Lives, and brave Deaths; particularly of that holy and wonderful one of the Son of God: Can we imagine that this good Spirit will not convey strength into our Souls, when we have those helps, and are in the use of his own Methods?

I conclude this with that which seems a most convincing Argument, both of the wonderful Efficacy, as well as Necessity of great Care and Caution, Watchfulness and Diligence to be used by those that would live very well: 'tis this, That this without

the great advantages which we Christians have, has raised Men to an higher pitch of Holiness and Goodness, than our most perfect Institution without that can ever bring us to. There is no Man, who considers, but will allow the Christian way leads to far greater Perfection than any method which the Heathens ever had, and that we have abundance of Advantages under our Dispensation, which they never enjoyed: And yet we can't but with shame confess, that several of them have out-stript most of us in the Race of Vertue. Of which, if we examine the Reason, we shall be able to discover none but what may be resolved into this, *viz.* That they were careful how they lived, and we are not. *Socrates* and others of them made living well their great Study, their own Business, whereas we account it our περεργον, our Diversion. We bestow little care and pains on that, and this is the true reason why they were better without the Christian Religion than we are with it.

We may be somewhat more assured of the truth of this Observation, if we will but take notice of our selves or others: For, we shall always find, that according as we are more or less intent on, and diligent in the business of living well, we do make greater or lesser advances in Vertue. And in all our Observations, have we met with a Man, who has been set upon it to live well, that in time has not done so? Or have we known one that has made it a by-business, that ever attained to any considerable perfection of Goodness? For

For these Reasons, we may suppose holy *David* did so *consider his Ways*, and resolved that he would *take heed to them*, and was so fully set on *walking in the perfect way*, and gives this advice to *young Men* that would *cleanse their way*, that *they should take heed to it according to the Word of God.*

This may suffice concerning the Reasons why Christians should live exactly, *i. e.* why they should aim at the best and most excellent life; and in order to that, why they should use care and diligence; both which, I think, are implyed in the word, which we render circumspectly.

It is but agreeable to the Religion we profess, to be so circumspect and careful that we may live well. And this is necessary and serviceable to our Happiness, and attaining the utmost Ends for which we were made, which we can never accomplish, till we arrive at the greatest perfection of which we are capable; and this we can never reach otherwise than by always doing the best we can do: Which we shall never do unless we use our utmost care and diligence so to do. Likewise if we be careful to live as well as can be, we shall be so assisted by the divine Grace, that we shall advance to greater Perfection than we have at present, according to that of our Saviour, *To him that hath shall be given.* And if we continue thus doing, we shall go forward from doing something well, to do all so; and from lower degrees of Vertue to higher, till we have attained to an universal goodness in the highest degrees;

that is, to all that Perfection to which our Natures can be raiſed; and conſequently to all that Happineſs of which we are capable and to the attaining of all the Ends for which our good Creator made us.

Thus we ſee how both neceſſary and available a means living exactly is to all the Ends for which we were made.

Thirdly. Suppoſing now that we are reſolved to live thus; for advice what we are to do in order to it, I offer theſe four Particulars to be obſerved.

1. Let it be your ſerious and conſtant endeavour, to get a true, certain, clear, diſtinct, adequate *Idea* of the Perfection or exact Goodneſs, 1. Of an Action conſidered both ſingly and in it ſelf, and alſo in the Reference it has, and the Order in which it ſtands to others; 2. Of a Life, or the whole Complex and Series of Actions which can be done by you, all the time you live on Earth. Underſtand what is that Good, what is the beſt you can do all the days of your Life. In which you have the wiſe Men going before you, *Eccleſ.* 2. 3. *I ſought in mine Heart to give my ſelf unto Wine (yet acquainting mine Heart with Wiſdom) and to lay hold on Folly, till I might ſee what was that Good for the Sons of Men, which they ſhould do under the Heaven, all the days of their life.* And not only *Solomon*, but as many as have been wiſe Men, as far as they have been ſo, have ſeriouſly conſidered this.

An

And indeed this is absolutely necessary to an exact Life, that we should have an exact knowledg of what it is; and 'tis the first thing that is to be done; *If ye know these things*, says our Saviour, *happy are ye if ye do them.* Men's Practice can rise no higher than their Understandings, which are the first Springs, the beginnings of all other Motions. We must first know, before we can will and do. And if the Knowledg be imperfect, the Action that proceeds from it cannot be perfect. We must follow our Guide; and the perfection of all our other Actions is limited by our Understanding: Therefore the Apostle prayed, *that their Love might abound more and more in Knowledg*, &c. This may serve to shew the Reason of this Direction.

Let me also add, That I suppose every Man has some Notion of Perfection, but 'tis too often mixed with falshood, 'tis uncertain, obscure, confused, defective and short. My advice is, that we be more explicit, and rid our Minds from these Defects as much as may be. And for our help; that we begin with an Action, and consider what is the Goodness, the Perfection of a single Action absolutely and by it self, and then in relation to others; which when we have once found, then we may proceed to enquire, What is the good and exact Life?

2. Endeavour that this Knowledg may be ever present with you; let the *Idea* be always before you. The Reason of this is, that dormant Knowledg, such as is not ready

for use upon every Occasion, will be of little efficacy, indeed it can do nothing. It is all one, as to the conduct of our Lives, to be wholly ignorant, as not to have an actual present Knowledg; 'tis the same thing to have no Guide, as not to have him with us.

That your Knowledg may be thus ready always; think of it frequently, and take every occasion to be in the exercise of it both before you proceed to Action, and in the very time, thinking what is the best you can do, and set before your selves the greatest perfection of such an Action as you are doing, or about to do. After you have done, reflect on it, and compare your Action with its *Idea*.

3. Be fully perswaded of the surpassing Excellency, the greatest Utility, the absolute Necessity of living so Exactly.

By a full perswasion, I do not mean only a conviction in the Understanding, so as it cannot with-hold its assent, but also a perfect conquest of the Will, so as it approves and chuses. When a Man's Soul is so fully satisfied that there is no better Life it can live, that it can do no better than that which the *Idea* it has presents it with; so as it has not the least doubt, nor any desire or inclination to do, to live otherwise; then is he fully perswaded.

Let the Scripture, nay, let our own Sense and Reason inform us, how absolutely necessary it is not only to do some Actions exactly, but to live so, that we may be perfect, and

attain

attain to a compleat happineſs: And that we cannot be ſafe from Hell, and a miſerable State, if we be not continually aiming at, and reaching after the beſt Life.

That you may be thus perſwaded, conſider that this was the great Deſign of the coming of the Son of God among us, and of all he did and ſuffered. *He gave himſelf for us, that he might redeem us from all Iniquity, and purify*, &c. *and he gave himſelf for his Church, that he might ſanctify it, waſhing it with the Laver of Regeneration, that he might preſent it*, &c.

4. Let us be very careful to will and do all that which we at preſent think and know beſt to be done. By this means,

1. Our Minds will be kept in their truly natural State, and our Faculties will be compacted and united with, and in a fit ſubordination to one another. Whereas if what our Souls think beſt is not will'd by us, or if we do approve and like, yet we do not do it, there is an unnatural diſtraction and diviſion among the Powers of our Natures, there is a diſorder in the Soul.

2. Our whole Man will be in Exerciſe; the Underſtanding directing, the Will complying and following the Guidance, and the executive Powers moving in obedience to the Will as they ought. This maintains an integrity or wholeneſs in us.

3. This has a manifeſt tendency to Perfection. For, this is the way to free the Soul from Miſtakes, if it chance to be under any concerning this Action. Practice is

the ſureſt way to confirm us in the Truth, or to convince us of an Error.

Again; Whilſt the Soul is kept in this State, it is in the beſt diſpoſition for farther information. Beſides, Experience, as well as Reaſon, ſhews, That the beſt we know, or can do at preſent, carries us on to clearer Knowledg, and greater Power, and more Perfection. It does thus in all other Caſes, and muſt do ſo in this.

INFERENCES.

1. If Chriſtians ought to live thus exactly, then this convinces two ſorts of Men.

(1.) Them who cenſure and vilify others, becauſe they endeavour ſo to do, looking upon it as needleſs, fruitleſs, fooliſh, evil for Men to trouble themſelves, to be ſo ſtrict and exact in their Lives. Such perhaps may mean well, but they expreſs themſelves ill: they may intend no more but this, That Men are over-cautious and fearful in ſome Matters, when there is no ſuch danger as they ſeem to apprehend; and that they are over-exact in ſome little indifferent Matters, as the Phariſees might be, *tithing Mint and Aniſe*, &c. which makes it ſuſpicious that they do not take care proportionably about the greater Matters. But theſe Men ſhould expreſs themſelves more warily: For when they cry out againſt living ſo exactly and ſtrictly, they condemn a Man for doing his Duty. We ought to be exact; we cannot live too well.

(2.) They

(2.) They also seem to be in a great mistake, who, tho they meddle not with others, yet, do excuse and acquit themselves from going on to perfection; *i. e.* they satisfy themselves that they do that which is good, but never concern themselves to do better. They think there is no Duty incumbent on them to do the best they can, to go on to Perfection, *to be holy as God is holy, and perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect.*

2. Hence it appears, that it will be expected and required of all Men, that they be good, answerably to the Advantages they have of being so. Whosoever is better born, that is, has a better natural Temper, and Parts, and Education, is more free from Temptations and Hinderances, has more knowledg, and greater opportunities of doing well, more will be required at his hands, than at anothers who has not received so much from God. The Righteous Lord of all will call us to account, according to what he has given us. *To whom he has given much, of him he will require more.* And hence it follows, that all we Christians have a great Account to make. We pity the poor Heathens; we may do well to consider, whether they will not give a better account of themselves than we can of ours.

3. A very exactly good Life is agreeable to the Christian Institution: And they who live best, do most answer the ends of, and live as becomes the Gospel of Christ. Some pretend to be better, and more true and ortho-

orthodox Christians than others; let them shew that they are so by their better and more Christian Lives. Thou say'st that thou art a Christian. Does thy Life shew it? What dost thou more than Heathens or Infidels? And thou, who wouldst be thought of the highest form of Christianity, make it appear that thou art so by the surpassing goodness of thy life. To live Exactly, is a fitting Compliance with, a suitable behaviour under the dispensation of the Gospel under which we are.

To what I have already said upon this Argument, I think fit to add somewhat more. Thus then: When the Apostle requires us to walk exactly or circumspectly, he enjoins us to give good heed, that in our whole life, 1. We do nothing we should not do; Nor, 2. omit what we should, that is, that we do nothing that's evil, that we neglect nothing that's good, whether we respect the Matter of our Account, the Thing done, or the Principles, the Reasons and Ends from and for which we do them, when, and where, and how we do them, that there be no Fault, no Defect, but in every respect, and on every account, that our Actions be good, that is, both suitable to, and becoming us that do them, and also beneficial to us and to all. That our Actions be thus singly and in themselves, as also in the order and reference they have to each other, and to the whole Series of them, the course of Life.

For

For the making of this plain and easy to every Understanding, and fit for use; I will give one single Instance in a particular Action, *viz.* Giving an Alms to some poor Person. The Action in the matter of it is unquestionably good in general; but then, that which I give must be mine own, if it be not, I must first restore before I can give. Again, I must give according to my Ability, that is, I must not by this Gift disable and hinder my self from doing any thing that's better and more necessary, than my Contribution towards the relief of one poor Man is; such I account to be the convenient Provision for Wife and Children. A Man must not make himself or Children Beggars, by relieving Beggars. Again, all Dues to the publick Service, to all publick Officers, must be discharged, before we can set apart any thing for the relief of the Poor; that is, Justice must take place of Alms-giving. This being supposed, that I have something of mine own, which I cannot dispose to any better or more necessary use: I must then, if I would be exact, consider the Party to whom, the Quantity which, and the Season when I give. And if all this consider'd, the Contribution be good, that is, if it bear a proportion to my Abilities, to his Necessity, if it be done in a fit Season, and proceed from a knowledg of all this, and with a willing Heart, and for a good Design, I am then exact in this particular. But if I give that which is not mine, if I give more than can be spared from necessary Uses;

Uſes; if, by attending this, I be taken off from ſome greater Charity, ſome better Work; if I do it unſeaſonably, that is, ſooner or later than is behoveful; if I mingle my Charity with Anger and Scorn, and beſtow mine Alms with Contempt or Paſſion; or if I do this to be ſeen or talked of, or meerly to ſave my Credit, or only to rid my ſelf of the trouble of an importunate Beggar; or do it without knowledg, or never conſidering, meerly out of cuſtom, or from a natural tenderneſs and compaſſion, I do not in this caſe walk exactly.

I add no more under this Particular, having already ſaid ſo much, as perhaps may diſcourage ſome that are looking towards Vertue. They will be ready to ſay, Why ſuch Exactneſs? this is more than needs, nay more than can be uſed: for if we ſhould be thus nice in all our Actions, we ſhould be hindred from doing them; as he that will not do a thing unleſs he do it well, will probably not do it at all. We ſhould miſerably perplex our Minds, and fill our Souls with endleſs anxiety and ſcrupuloſity, and all this to no purpoſe; for we ſhould never be exact in what we do. No more than a Mathematician, who has an exact *Idea* of a Triangle, or a Circle, can draw ſuch Figures.

To this I reply:

1. That we may, by the Divine Aſſiſtance, attain to ſuch exactneſs, as to do that which is really Good. Tho it will not be perfectly, yet it is truly ſo; nay, and by

by degrees, we ſhall be going on towards the greateſt Perfection, as both your ſelves and every one's Experience teſtify.

2. There is great neceſſity of our taking heed to be exact, leſt if we be not, we ſhould do ill. For,

1. Vice does ſo border upon Vertue, that it's not very eaſy to diſcern the Boundaries. And the Paſſage from good to bad, is ſo ſhort and facil, that without good care and caution it will not be prevented. It is a Matter of ſome difficulty to ſet the Limits to each, in ſpeculation, and in general. And 'tis ſtill harder to do this in particular, and a farther work yet to keep within the bounds we underſtand, eſpecially when theſe are variable, and cannot be ſet without a reſpect to very alterable Accidents, and ſuch Circumſtances as are hardly diſcernible.

E. G. In the Caſe of Temperance. Who can ſay, Thus far it goes, and no farther; thus much a Man may eat or drink, but not a jot more? All will grant, this is not to be defined in general, nor that the ſame quantity is to be allowed to every one; for one will be ſtarved, another drunk. So then, every one muſt determine his own proportion, which to do truly and wiſely, he muſt be able to diſtinguiſh betwixt the deſires of Nature, and thoſe that ariſe from Diſeaſe. And he muſt always underſtand what is the good ſtate or plight of his Body in general; and that is, when it is moſt ſerviceable to the Soul in all its Capacities, and in the doing every Work in which that ſhall imploy it;

it; when it will not only be fit to serve the Soul in some few, but in all the Businesses which shall be required of it; and is not more helpful in one or some of the lower, whilst it proves an Incumbrance and Impediment in the higher and greater Operations, and this not only with respect to the present, but to the longest time.

Now all this requires both a good presence of Mind, and great exactness of Thoughts. It supposes observation and remembrance of what is past, and a diligent calculating and exact weighing, both of the state of his own Body, and also of his condition in the World. Nor must he only consider himself, but others, his Wife, and Children, and the Poor. For he that allows himself all that may conduce to the good plight of his own Body, without consideration of his Family and Kindred, without regard to the urging necessities of poor Strangers, he is excessive in his self-gratification.

Indeed, whosoever considers how many things are to be thought of, and compared, before a Man can wisely determine himself to that which is good and fit for him to do, not only in this, but in many other Instances, even all that he is to do in his whole Life, will easily grant that there is need of great care and exactness, of great caution and circumspection.

On these and such like Accounts, how easy is it for a Man to go beyond the bounds of any Vertue? nay, how hard is it not to do this? When he intends Temperance,

not

not to fall into an unreaſonable unnatural denial of himſelf in thoſe Gratifications, which are not only allowable, but commendable. And leſt he ſhould indulge himſelf in ſenſual Exceſſes, he will abſtain from thoſe Entertainments which are natural and innocent, and if not neceſſary, yet very convenient and uſeful.

Again; How hard is it not to ſlip out of a juſt indignation and diſpleaſure at ſome miſcarriage and offence, into an immoderate over-vehement anger, and an unbecoming fury and rage? How difficult is it to ſay, Thus far I may, and ſhall be angry, and beyond this I will not go; and to keep to this Reſolution? On the other hand; whilſt a Man is but laying fit reſtraints on this Paſſion, how apt is he to fall into ſtupidity, and an unactive dulneſs, which has a ſemblance of mildneſs; and neither be moved in himſelf, nor yet uſe that diſcipline to others, which Nature and Juſtice requires?

I might obſerve the ſame in all other Vertues, there is a great vicinity and nearneſs betwixt them and Vice. The Heathen Moraliſts have placed almoſt all Vertues in the midſt between two Vices. And the difference they have made betwixt them is, That one is an Exceſs, the other a Defect; the one is more, the other leſs than ſhould be. So that, according to this Explication of it, Vertue does but differ gradually from Viciocity. And how exact muſt he be, that will neither exceed, nor be deficient? do more,

more, nor leſs than what is fit?

He that looks but careleſly, and with a wandring eye on them, will not be able to diſtinguiſh betwixt Vertue and Vice, they are ſometimes dreſſed up ſo like each other. So an abjectneſs of Mind may paſs for Humility; And he that does not narrowly obſerve them, may be eaſily deceived, and think himſelf, or another, vertuouſly humble, when indeed he thinks untruly. So Liberality and Magnificence, and a vain Profuſeneſs, may be miſtaken for each other. And whilſt a Man is ſacrificing to Vanity, and throwing away his Mony out of oſtentation, and a laviſh humor, he may think himſelf liberal, and magnificent, if he do not exactly obſerve.

2. I may alſo perſwade the ſame from the tendency there is in ſome good Action to that which is very evil. Inſomuch, that if we do not ſet a very ſtrict watch over our ſelves, we ſhall begin in a very good and commendable Work, but end in a very ill one: We ſhall ſlip from that which is good and fit, to that which is vicious and deformed.

To give an inſtance or two. This Man ſets out in defence of ſome important Truth, (that which either is, or appears ſuch to him). Now this is a very good and neceſſary thing in general, and it may be alſo fit for him to undertake in particular; that is, he is qualified to defend it, for elſe he had much better let it alone. But if he be not careful, this his love of, and Zeal for Truth, may endanger his falling into abundance

dance of miſcarriages. For, whilſt he is engaged in a zealous defence of one Truth, he may heedleſly give up many others as important as that, or he may ſuffer himſelf to be put out of temper, and the good ſtate or uſe of his Mind; he may hereby render himſelf unfit for, and in a manner uncapable of ſome other Works, which are not leſs conſiderable than this. He may, by too great earneſtneſs, indiſpoſe himſelf, ſo as that he ſhall not be in a condition fit to receive the Influences of Heaven, nor to think of, and go out after God. He may be ſo far tranſported, as to leap over all the Bounds, not only of Charity and Humanity, but of Truth and Juſtice too. And if ſo be he can hope, this will be ſerviceable to the upholding that which he thinks Truth, he will not ſtick to blacken and beſpatter, and uncharitably traduce, and falſly to calumniate his Adverſary, as he calls him. Thus a Man may be drawn into manifold miſchief, from ſo good a Deſign as vindicating Truth is, if he be not aware, and careful to prevent and obviate the Evils, to which this very good thing has ſome tendency.

Again; What tendency is there, and how eaſily do Men paſs from true and real Religion, the pure and ſpiritual Worſhip of God, to Formality and cuſtomarineſs in Devotions, to ſuperſtitious Practices, to Idolatry it ſelf; which prove the bane of all true Religion?

The ſame may be obſerved concerning the Tendencies of all the Natural and Innocent, and of the very beſt and perfecteſt Actions we do: which, if we do not take good heed to our ſelves, will lead us into foul Miſcarriages, and ſinful Practices. For, they have ſome tendency to make us proud, and think too well and highly of our ſelves. A good performance makes other Men ſpeak, and us think well of our ſelves: and if we at that time forget God, and acknowledg not our dependance on him, we take too much to our ſelves. Or, if we over-look our own many Defects and Shortneſſes, and are affected to our ſelves, as if we had no fault, then the good we have done has led us into a great miſchief.

This then is another Reaſon, why we ſhould be thus cautious and circumſpect, becauſe of the evil Tendencies which the very beſt Actions and Things have.

3. Unleſs we be very careful and exact, we ſhall not be able to ſet the proper Limits to ſeveral vertuous and good Actions; Without which we ſhall not, in caſe of competition, give a due preference to the better, nor ſhall we allot to each its proper time. And where we are defective in theſe, we ſhall run into great Faults and grand Miſchiefs. I before ſaid, that there is great need of ſome exactneſs, to ſet and keep the bounds betwixt Vertue and Vice. I now ſay, there is need of great care, to know and obſerve the difference betwixt one Vir-

tue

tue and another; the want of which is of moſt pernicious Conſequence in the Life of Man.

I make account, the comparative knowledg of Good and Evil, *i.e.* the underſtanding what's better or worſe than other, is intrinſecal and eſſential to that Wiſdom that guides our Practice. And according as any Man has more or leſs of this Knowledg, he is thus far more or leſs wiſe. He is wiſe that does all his Actions in ſuch ſubordination to each other, that they are all ſubſervient to the beſt and higheſt we can exert. But this ſubordination can never be kept without great care and exactneſs.

The truth of this, and the force of the Argument, will be better diſcern'd by particular Inſtances.

Obedience to Governors is a great Duty; but he that knows not in what order this ſtands to others, may by this neglect and violate ſome greater. He who thinks he is to be abſolutely and univerſally determined in his practice by the decrees of his Superiors, if they enact that which is immutably and eternally evil into a Law, will look on himſelf as obliged to obey. And tho they forbid what God has expreſly commanded, or command what God has forbid, he will think himſelf bound to an Univerſal Obedience to their Edicts. If a *Nebuchadnezzar* ſhould ſet up an Idol, and require him to bow down to it, this Man, who has ſet no Limits to his Obedience to Gover-

nors, will fall down and worſhip the Image; that is, he will obey his earthly Governors in ſuch Inſtances as are expreſly contrary to the immutable indiſpenſible Laws of Heaven. ¶ And on the other hand, he that has not learn'd to make difference betwixt his Prince, and his Father, or Maſter, or any other Secular Power, and to pay a greater regard to him, than to any other Superior, will be apt to fall into Snares and Sin. For, as often as their Commands claſh, he will be in danger to diſobey the Supream.

¶ Again; The Man that makes no diſcrimination betwixt the greater and the other Commands, the more and leſs weighty Matters of the Law, will be in danger to ſpend his Zeal and Time in *tithing Mint, and Aniſe, and Cummin*, whilſt he neglects *Truth and Juſtice, and the Love of God.* He will not omit an hour, by his own appointment ſet apart for private or publick Devotion, to do the greateſt act of Charity that can be done. He will not prophane the Sabbath to ſave a Life, *&c.*

This is ſufficient to ſhew the neceſſity of limiting and diſtinguiſhing thoſe which are confeſſedly our Duties; that ſo we may do the greater, and not culpably leave the leſſer undone; that they may not juſtle out each other. And what critical exactneſs is neceſſary to the thus weighing and ballancing one good Action with another, to the comparing them ſo together, that we may ſee the

the order and relation they have to each other, and to all the reſt!

4. He had need live very exactly, who keeps himſelf in a diſpoſition to know and chuſe well, and to do that which is good; that is, that he may be in the beſt capacity to underſtand, to apprehend and judg what's Good and Evil; inclined and forward to will and chuſe the one, and to refuſe the other; and have all his executive Powers ready to obey his Will, guided by Underſtanding. How careful and exact muſt he be in his Actions, who would keep himſelf in this fitneſs, to do all the good that offers it ſelf to him?! Eſpecially if we conſider theſe two things:

1. That every falſe Reaſoning, diſorderly Paſſion, irregular Appetite, ill Action indiſpoſes, unfits him and makes him averſe to doing good. For the truth of this, I appeal to experience.

And, 2. If he be unprepared, indiſpoſed for the preſent, whatever Knowledg he may have acquired, or whatever Habit of doing well he may have, yet all this will be of little or no uſe to him, if he be under a preſent indiſpoſition. It is requiſit that he keep his many-ſtringed Inſtrument always in good tune; for elſe, tho it ſelf, the Inſtrument, the Strings, and all be very good, yet it will not make muſick till it be tuned, till all the Strings ſound concordantly to each other, and together make an agreeing Harmony. And whoſoever conſiders the many

Faculties and Appetites which are in him, and that they must all be tuned to one another, that they must answer and serve each other, conspire and harmonize into one end, that is, terminate in the greatest good; He will be satisfied, that this is not to be done without great care and exactness.

And thus I hope I have answered the Objection, That it is needless; and shewn, that there is great necessity of Exactness, that is, if we would live well.

If any think this an infinite toil, I would ask him, Whether it would not turn to account at last, and whether any thing so much deserves his care as this, *To live well?* Thou that art so extreamly cautious and circumspect, wary and accurate in petty Trifles, in some of the most inconsiderable things thou dost, How canst thou be negligent and heedless how thou livest, whether thou dost well or ill, when nothing can possibly be so important to Man as this?

But perhaps some, to excuse themselves from this Exactness, will say, They have never observ'd much to come of it; but rather that they who have been so very exact, have lived worse than they who have lived carelessly.

To such I reply;

1. All who seem careful, or negligent, are not really so.

2. Men have been careful only of some particular Actions, and neglected all the rest. Now it may perhaps make better musick

ſick if none of the Strings be wound up, than only one of them. I am ſure there is greater diſcord and deformity in our Actions; when a Man ſhall be devout, and unjuſt, or uncharitable, or intemperate, than if he had no Religion, as well as no Juſtice; and it is, I think, more ungrateful to the beholder.

3. It may be their care has been wrong directed, and they have ſtriven to be exact, but have all the while had a falſe Notion of what Exactneſs is. As a Ship that plays up and down the Seas, as the Wind and Tide carries it, will not (tho no care be taken) be ſo far from the Port whither it ſhould go; as that Ship whoſe Pilot ſteers a quite contrary Courſe: So I count, that he who ſuffers himſelf to be driven by every Inclination and Appetite, will not be ſo far off his Perfection, as he that aims and ſtrives at the ſtate which is oppoſite to it. And alas! How many are thoſe who call Good Evil, and Evil Good? How many who think that to be their Perfection, which is moſt oppoſite to it? So the Monkiſh Perfectioniſts have eſteemed it an high attainment, to be without all ſenſe of this Body, and to be wholly unaffected by it: which is certainly a moſt unnatural ſtate, and very unſuitable to humane Condition in this World, and a great hindrance to a Man from attaining Perfection, and will make him uncapable of doing that good which God intended he ſhould do in this Life, and

by this Body. Others again think it their Perfection, to be in a passionate emotion of Mind, having no regard to the good use of their Understanding, or their other Faculties, which yet are far more necessary to them, and beneficial to others, than that Passion is.

Now whilst Men have been thus mistaken in their Notion of Perfection, or what it is to be exact; no wonder if their care and endeavour to be so, have done them little good: Nay, it may be more harm than good.

After all this; if any imagine that this exactness will be a matter of infinite Scrupulosity and Anxiety, and fill his Mind with perpetual Disquiet and Trouble, of Pains and Toyl: Let him know, that when he is perswaded that it is good, and useful, and necessary, and when he has accustomed himself to it, it will be no longer hard and troublesom, but a pleasant and delightful Work. And the harder it seems at first, the greater reason has he to think it is so much the more necessary and excellent.

The Sum of what I have exhorted, and which I take to be the true and full Sense of the Apostle's Words, is, That we should take care, give good heed, use great caution and diligence, that we never do any ill, nor omit any good we should not: And that we constantly do all we should. And whatever we do, that we endeavour to do it as well as is possible, as it can be done. That we neither

ther through Negligence and Heedleſsneſs, through Ignorance, or Miſtake, or Inadvertency omit, nor knowingly prevaricate in, nor willingly violate, nor careleſly and lazily perform our Duty; nor do it by halves, lamely and imperfectly. And that we thus behave our ſelves, not in ſome ſingle actions only, but in the tenour and courſe of them, and in our whole Life.

The Arguments I have uſed to perſuade to this, have been ſuch as theſe; 1. That it's very agreeable to the Chriſtian Diſpenſation under which we are, that we ſhould be thus exact in our Lives. 2. That the moſt abſolute and univerſal perfection of Life and Action is intrinſecally and eſſentially neceſſary to our compleat Happineſs: And as 'tis neceſſary, ſo 'twill moſt certainly procure and effect it. And ſuch care and caution, endeavour and diligence is no leſs neceſſary, nor will have leſs Efficacy to make us live perfectly well and virtuouſly, than that has to make us happy: Which I have ſhewed, as from ſeveral other Arguments, ſo from a Conſideration of the likeneſs and nearneſs of Vice to Vertue; of the great tendency there is in many good Actions and Things to that which is ill; of the great difficulty there is in ſetting bounds to ſeveral Vertues, and giving each its due place and order: And laſtly, of the many things which muſt be done to keep our ſelves in a diſpoſition and readineſs to know, and will, and do the will of God.

I might also have pleaded this from the honour that will come to God and Religion; and the great benefit and advantage that will accrue to other Men, that shall behold and converse with us if we live thus exactly. But I think what has been said is sufficient to perswade any one who will consider. I shall therefore leave this, and proceed to the second Proposition which I propounded to discourse of.

A DISCOURSE OF *Redeeming the Time.*

Of the Second Proposition.

EPH. 5. 16.

Redeeming the Time, because the Days are Evil.

WE ought to make the best of bad Times, when we fall into them, from those words, *Ephes.* 5. 16. *Redeeming the Time, because the Days are Evil.*

I proceed to ſuggeſt ſome few of thoſe many uſeful and excellent things, which are contained in theſe words, and to which they lead us naturally and eaſily, in this plain method.

Firſt, We will conſider what Time, Seaſon, or Opportunity, is in general; and what in particular was that Seaſon which St. *Paul* here means. And alſo what is the import of Redeeming the Seaſon.

Secondly, I will offer ſome Reaſons why we ſhould redeem the Seaſon, and particularly conſider that which is here expreſſed, *the Days are Evil*.

Thirdly, I will mention ſome of thoſe things which rob us of our Time, and deprive us of the Seaſon, which St. *Paul* here exhorts us to make our own.

Fourthly, I will exhibit ſome of thoſe Advices and Directions, whereby we may be aſſiſted in Redeeming this Time or or Seaſon.

Of the Firſt;

Seaſon or Opportunity, which is the Engliſh of καιρὸς, ſignifies Time of Action, *i. e.* ſuch a concurrence of all the Cauſes, as makes the doing of any Work eaſy, and gives hope of Succeſs: When there is ſuch a confluence of Cauſes without, that if we will do what is in us, and cooperate with them, we ſhall probably not fail to bring what we deſign to effect.

Thus

Thus a good Veſſel and Pilot, Wind and Tide, make an Opportunity for us to be conveyed to ſuch a place: And if we be but willing to uſe them to this purpoſe, they are likely to bring us thither. Whereas if we would go, when we are not favoured and help'd by ſuch Cauſes, we ſhall either not at all, or very hardly, and with much more pains and difficulty come to our Journeys end.

To this it will not be amiſs to add, that Opportunity does not only ſignify the preſence of thoſe things without us, which contribute towards the producing an Effect, but alſo the diſpoſition and fitneſs of our own Faculties to cooperate with them: For if they be in an incapacity, all External Cauſes will not make an Opportunity. As if a Man be ſick, that he cannot ſafely go by Water, all the Tide and Wind, *&c.* do not make it a Seaſon for him to go.

And if we take in all this into our Notion of Opportunity, in common Speech we do not ſay that a Man has an opportunity of doing an ill thing. Tho 'tis true, that external Things may ſo far concur with an ill Mind, that they may make it eaſy to perperpetrate ſome bad Work; as we ſay, *Occaſion makes a Thief.* But if we underſtand (as generally we do) by Opportunity, a concurrence of the Cauſes without us, with our own Faculties, then we never ſay that a Man has opportunity of doing that which is Evil. It either is, or is thought good, either by us, or by him that does it. Which

ſhews

ſhews that even the Community of Men, who make words ſignify as they pleaſe, do ſuppoſe, that our Faculties were not deſign'd or framed to do evil Things; nor are ever properly and truly fit to do any thing but good; and therefore we can do nothing which we do not think ſo. This Obſervation I think to be true.

If any be of another mind, and that Opportunity or Seaſon is applicable indifferently to good or bad Purpoſes and Practices; yet I ſuppoſe it will be granted, that the Apoſtle in this place, intends the Time or Seaſon of doing good Actions, ſuch as are fit and becoming, profitable and beneficial; ſuch as will be honourable to God, and give a reputation to Chriſtian Religion, helping forward our own and others Happineſs. So that St. *Paul* exhorts us here, *to redeem the Time* of doing all that good which the Goſpel requires, of living that excellent Life, and practiſing all thoſe Vertues which are agreeable to the Diſpenſation of Chriſtianity; of doing all thoſe good Works here on Earth, which by our perfect Inſtitution we are aſſiſted and obliged to do.

And if this be the Action that St. *Paul* means, it will not be hard to find out the Cauſes, which when they concur, make it a good Seaſon for doing thus; when it will be more eaſy to live well, and we may (probably) be more ſucceſsfully good, and attain all the Ends of our Excellent Religion.

Now

Now a constant firm Health, a competent provision of the Necessaries and Conveniences of Life, freedom from Slavery and long Restraints, for the most part to live in Society, a state of Peace and Quiet, of good Will and Amity with Men, and an abode here on Earth, till Age has made us useless; these are the things which we commonly and truly think do all conduce to this purpose. But yet I dare not say, that such a Condition would be best for all Men. / Experience proves to us undeniably, that a mixture of Good and Evil is best for the generality of Men in this State: / to have a dash of Adversity, nay, to be in a more depressed Condition, may, I believe, be generally better for us.

/ Some Men are good in Sickness, or in Want; who, if they enjoy'd their Health, or lived in Abundance, would not be so. Nay, I doubt not but this is true of the Community of Mankind. And that the wise and good Providence that rules all things, has so ordered it, that the far greatest part are poor, or sick, or under restraint, or have Enemies, or do not live long; because he sees it necessary to keep them under this sharp Discipline; / and for this Reason, that hereby they may be trained up to be and to do Good, and kept out of those Temptations which would be irresistible to them, and so preserved from doing those Wickednesses which would make them liable to the unalterable Justice, and beget such a disposition in them, as might endanger their

their being irrecoverably bad and miserable.

I cannot but think that these Evils are Medicinal, and good Antidotes, which the wise and good Physician makes use of, for curing the worst of Diseases in some, and preventing them in others... Nay, that even very good Men have found it good for them to *be thus afflicted*; so *David* tells us: So *Job*, and other the best of Men in former Ages. Yea, the Son of God himself, and his first and best Followers were persecuted by Men, and afflicted by God in the worst of these Instances.

By all this I am convinced, That even Poverty and Disgrace, and such other Calamities, do not only contribute to bad Mens becoming good, but to good Mens being better, by giving them an opportunity for the exercise of some Vertues, which would have had no place in a prosperous State, and are necessary to our Perfection.

But tho I grant all this, yet considering the imperfection of the best of Men, and the necessity of Health, and Liberty, and Plenty, and Peace, to enable them for those Works which are proper and useful in this State, and to compleat their Vertue, (which can never be, unless they pass through varieties of Conditions) I can't but look on these things, as conducing to the good Life of Christians.

However these things may not facilitate the practice of Vertue to all Men, yet they will to such as know how to use their time;

'tis

'tis best such should be at liberty, and that they who know how to employ an Estate, should have one; and if they be disposed to do something better than drudg for the Body, that they should not be taken up with providing for that; and such real Christians are, and if they who pretend to be Christians were, I do not doubt but it would be thus with the generality.

Thus much I thought fit to say, lest from my Explication of this Phrase, any should raise an Objection against that Providence, which orders all things according to greatest Wisdom and Goodness, and undoubtedly makes that the Condition of every Man which is best for him, either to help him to live well, or to keep him from living ill; to promote his Vertue, or to restrain his Wickedness: Or where he would not do well, to make him suffer, that so he may hereby become capable of receiving good from the hands of him who will recompence us, not only for the good we do, but for the ills we suffer.

After all then it remains, that a healthful, free, peaceable, plentiful Condition, and a long Life may pass for Opportunity, or such a confluence of things as make it more easy for us to live well.

Which may be farther evinced by this Reason, that by being in this Condition, we are freed from the importunate cravings of divers natural Appetites, which are hereby gratified and satisfied; and if they were not, would by their importunity disturb

and hinder us in our purſuit and practice of Goodneſs.

This then that I have ſaid, or part of this, or what ever it is, that in concurrence with the Goodneſs of Chriſtians, would contribute to their doing that Good to which their Religion obliged them, was that Seaſon or Time of Action which the Apoſtle here commands them to redeem.

There are particular Seaſons or Times of good Actions, when there is ſuch a confluence of things as help to and in the exerciſe of particular Vertues; which, according as there is need or reaſon for them, we are to endeavour to procure.

Let us in the next place ſee what it is to redeem or buy this Opportunity.

This Metaphor ſignifies, That we muſt do ſomething to make it our own, to bring it within our Power; ſo that if we will, we may uſe it, and ſerve our ſelves of it; that we may employ it to the purpoſe for which it ſerves, as, and how we will; and it is ſuppoſed by the Apoſtle, That they whom he exhorted to redeem, buy, purchaſe, or gain the Seaſon, would improve it to the Purpoſes of Chriſtian Life.

So that this Phraſe intimates, not only that we are to lay hold on Opportunity when offered, but alſo that we muſt endeavour, and be at coſt to procure it; and that not ſo much to have, as to uſe it; for if we do not uſe, we loſe it. It is no where more true than of Time, and Seaſon, which is the beſt of Time; not to uſe it, is the ſame as not to have it.

Thus

Thus then in general. To purchaſe this beſt part of Time, when there is ſuch a confluence of things, that may be helpful to us in doing ſome good Work; as it ſuppoſes that we will uſe it, ſo it ſignifies that we ſhould lay out our Labour, our Mony, and be at the Expence, or ſuffer the loſs of any Gratification that is of leſs worth than that Good, which by the help of this Opportunity we hope to do.

And by this I have told you, what is the Price we muſt pay for ſuch a Seaſon, when things concur to make Vertue feaſible. And the more feaſible they make any good Action, or courſe of Vertue, the more valuable is that Opportunity which they give us. And its Rate will be always more or leſs, according to the greater or leſs goodneſs of that Action or Life which it helps to. Nay, which may ſeem ſtrange, yet ſo it is, That even Life it ſelf is not too much to give for an opportunity to do ſome one Action, which may be ſo hugely beneficial, that it is really of greater value, than our ſtay here an hundred Years, and than all the good we could do in that ſpace (if we left this one undone) could amount unto. Such, I take to be the laying down my Life for the Sake of Religion, or the Service of our King and Country; or of any one excellently good, and publickly uſeful Man. And it is unqueſtionably better to part with Life, much more any thing leſs valuable, than to do violence to, and forgo a good Conſcience in any one Particular.

I need to add no more to this general Explication of what it is to redeem the Time or Season, but put you in mind that the Phraſe implies,

1. That we are not to neglect, to part from, to loſe, and forgo it: but, as *Solomon* ſays of Truth, *Buy the Truth, and ſell it not*; ſo I may ſay of Opportunity, Buy it almoſt at any price, ſell it at none; let it not go, whatever you may have in lieu of it.

2. That we are by all means to avoid the doing good Actions unſeaſonably, that is where a Seaſon may be had; for, otherwiſe they muſt be done, if it be poſſible, in or out of Seaſon; but when it may be had, it ſhould not be neglected.

This may ſuffice for the general. But if it be enquired what in particular the Apoſtle meant the *Epheſians* ſhould do, vvhen he bids them to *Redeem the Time?* To this I anſwer; That I ſuppoſe he intended hereby to excite their Care and Diligence; to put them upon the uſe of Prudence and Caution; to employ all honeſt and innocent Arts to take all pains to eſcape thoſe Wiles and Traps, thoſe Snares and Temptations to Sin, vvhich vvere laid for them; and thoſe other impendent Calamities of vvhich they vvere in danger, if they continued ſtedfaſt in their Profeſſion of Chriſtianity. That they ſhould be very vvatchful to obſerve, and in all lawful and harmleſs vvays, avoid all that might endanger their loſing their Religion, or their Lives, or Liberties for it;

it; vvhich vvould in part be a dammage or detriment to Religion (for they would hereby be taken off, if not wholly, yet in great measure from the practice of it) and consequently to themselves: however, many others would suffer by this, and the Interest of Religion would be weakned.

And they were not only to avoid the Evils, the Obstructions and Impediments that attended them, the Mischiefs and Dangers that were impendent, and whatever it was that might discourage them in, or deter them from the Christian Life; But also they were to be watchful and diligent Observers of the Times; and with a prudent dexterity to strike in with, and serve their Christian Designs of them, so far as could be consistent with Innocence and Honesty. That they should use honest Endeavours, by the Blessing of God, to preserve and encrease their Estates, take all harmless ways to procure or keep their Liberty; take care, as much as they may, to remove from their Governors all hatred and ill will against, or but suspition of them; behaving themselves so, as to deserve the good Opinion and good Will of all Men.

In general; That they use their utmost care and diligence to conciliate the Times to their Religion, that they might both practise that, and escape the Evils of them. That their being Christians might not exclude them from the good things of this Life and World, nor bring them into any Condition, whereby they should be hindred

from doing good. Nay, that they ſhould endeavour ſo to uſe them, as they might be moſt ſerviceable to a Chriſtian Life; not loſing any advantages to Vertue which they offer; not needleſsly and fooliſhly caſting themſelves into any ſuch Condition, as would cut them off from, or hinder them in their main buſineſs, but wiſely accommodating their Condition to their Vertue, ſo as to make it a Seaſon, and ſerviceable to their purpoſe: That tho the *Days were Evil*, and very contrary to the Chriſtian Diſpenſation, yet they ſhould take care and pains to gain all Advantages which could be had from them, to ſerve and promote it, and to make them befriend it; that the Profeſſion and Profeſſors of Chriſtianity might ſuffer as little Prejudice, and receive as much Advantage from that as was poſſible.

Thus I have given, not only a general but particular account of what Seaſon and Opportunity is, and of what it is to redeem it.

The ſum of all is, That we ought wiſely to obſerve, and diligently to improve every Seaſon, which the times wherein we are afford us, to do good. I ſay, to do good, for 'tis in order to this, that we are required to redeem the time. 'Tis not for the ſake of time: for, Time lying on our Hands is a Burden, a Torment; 'tis not that we may have it to throw away, that we may be idle and unactive; for, as good not be, as not act; as good have no time, as not employ it. Nor yet is it to be laid out on Vanity,

and

and ſpent in trifling and fooliſh Exerciſes, in being buſy to no purpoſe. Much leſs are we to redeem Time for doing Evil, for working Miſchief and Wickedneſs; this is the worſt loſs of time that can be: And if none of theſe be admitted, then it muſt be in order to doing good. And this, which is the end of all that we are and have, and indeed of all things, may well be ſuppoſed to be that which the Apoſtle intended.

What I have thus variouſly expreſſed, may be reduced to theſe three Particulars, which I think contain the full ſenſe of the Apoſtle's Exhortation; *Redeem*, &c.

1. That they ſhould not neglect any Opportunity which the Times offered them, but ſtrike in with every Advantage, every Seaſon, and take every occaſion of Good that ſhould be miniſtred to them; go with Tide, and ſail with every Wind, that would carry them towards the Port whither every Chriſtian is bound, *i. e.* his own greateſt Perfection, and thereby his doing greateſt Honour to God, and promoting the beſt ſtate of his Brethren and fellow-Creatures.

2. Whatever Evils they meet with, they ſhould endeavour wiſely to turn them into Good, and of Diſadvantages and Hinderances, they ſhould ſtrive to make them Helps and Furtherances to theſe good Purpoſes, and thus ſerve themſelves, and the Intereſt of their Chriſtian Religion of them.

3. Thoſe Evils which were unalterable, and inflexible, and could not by any means be accommodated to comply with theſe good Purpoſes, they ſhould in all prudent, honeſt, harmleſs ways, avoid them.

This I apprehend to be the meaning of the Apoſtle's Exhortation to the *Epheſians*. This I look upon as the Duty of all Chriſtians. I proceed now to the Reaſons of it, and ſhall ſum up all in theſe two: 1. We ought *to Redeem the Time*, that we may do moſt good: 2. Becauſe *the Days are Evil*. Theſe are both the Apoſtles Reaſons, only the firſt is implied, the ſecond expreſſed. And indeed, unleſs the firſt be ſuppoſed, the latter will be of no force.

1. That we may do good, we muſt redeem the Seaſon.

(1.) I ſuppoſe none will deny, but that doing good is the Work and Buſineſs, the End and Deſign, the very Life of his Life: And that all in Man refers to this one thing; He is nothing, he is in vain without he attain it. Nor;

(2.) Will it be doubted, but that we act very dependently on things without us: that there are abundance of Actions, which are Good or Evil, according to varieties of external Accidents, as they are ſeaſonable and unſeaſonable; and that we need the aſſiſtance of other things without, for the doing of thoſe that are unalterably good. How can I relieve my poor Brother with an Alms, if I my ſelf be poor, and have it not? Or how can I ſet apart Time for the

Service

Service of my own Soul, or of my Friend, or for my Devotions, as I think beſt, if I be a Slave, and not at mine own diſpoſal; if I be under Reſtraint or Confinement?

The force of this Argument is this: If our very Actions, many of them, be therefore good, becauſe they are ſeaſonable; if the Seaſon encreaſe their Goodneſs, and make thoſe that would be good out of ſeaſon, much better in it; (for, whereas in that caſe there is only an agreeableneſs betwixt our Actions and our ſelves, in this there is alſo an harmony betwixt us and the World): If this be true; And if we alſo in our Actions depend on favourable Circumſtances, and muſt be befriended by things without us: then we ought to uſe all honeſt Art to gain the Seaſon, and to make things on our ſide, that we may ſtill hold on our courſe of well-doing, tho we have but one Point of the Wind to ſail by.

2. *The Days are Evil*, therefore redeem the Time.

The former Reaſon was taken from the End, this from the difficulty of obtaining, and the danger of miſſing it, unleſs we obſerve this Counſel.

All *Times* are not alike *Evil*. But yet, as our Saviour ſaid, *ſufficient unto the day*, i. e. every day, *is the Evil thereof*; ſo there are no *Times*, wherein there is not *Evil* enough to excite the Cares, and to exerciſe the Patience and Diligence of every good Man.

There are Temptations to Sin, and Dangers of Suffering in all Ages. Since Man was firſt

firſt made, the old Serpent, and all thoſe degenerate Men, whom that wicked one has gain'd to his Party, have been in all Times oppoſing and perſecuting the Good; tho ſometimes the Divine Providence has reſtrain'd their Fury, and they have been able to do leſs harm; yet the All-wiſe God has thought fit thus to exerciſe and try us. And becauſe we are to live under ſuch Trials, it behoves us to take care, that we do not needleſly run into the Evils with which we are beſet; that we prudently decline the Traps and Gins that are laid for us; that when a freſh Gale blows, we neglect not to ſail with it; that we dexterouſly ſtrike in with Opportunity when it invites: And not only ſo, but that we uſe our beſt skill to procure one, to make things ſerve our honeſt purpoſe; becauſe if we do not thus, we ſhall be able to do very little good in our Lives, ſince we are like to meet with ſo many Difficulties and Hindrances in it.

Having thus argued in General for our *Redeeming the Time*, I ſhall now conſider thoſe three Particulars diſtinctly, in which I ſumm'd up the meaning of that Phraſe. And ſhall give Reaſons for every of them ſeverally.

1. Reaſons why we ſhould take every Opportunity that offers it ſelf, and be careful wiſely to employ it, neglecting none.

1. If we do not thus, we do not comply with the Divine Providence, we do not ſuit our

our ſelves to things, nor are uniform with the World. God offers me help, and I refuſe it; He works before, and would work with me when he gives an Opportunity, but *I regard not the Works of the Lord*; I reject his aſſiſtance. And what a thing is this to be ſaid by God to Man, I would have helped thee, and thou wouldſt not be helped? I would have reliev'd thee, but thou regardedſt not the Succours which I ſent? And yet thus it may be truly ſaid to every one that neglects Opportunity. And as there is a prophane neglect of God's providential Diſpenſations, in letting Seaſons of Actions ſlip by; ſo there is an unnatural jarring with things about us, a diſformity and diſcord with the World. For, they invite us to Action, but we will not act; they have prepared our way, but we will not walk: All things elſe are in a readineſs to aſſiſt us in ſome good enterprize, only we our ſelves are backward.

What a thing is this, that the World, the things about us, ſhould be more forward than Man to bring forth a good Work? that things below us ſhould ſo readily give their attendance, offer their Service, and invite us to it, while we, the beſt of God's Creation here, ſhall be behind-hand? When they meet together, and, as it were, cry out to us, Lend us your hand, do you our Maſter join with us, and this Good, or that great Work will be done; What ſtrange perverſeneſs is it in us to refuſe? When things ſay, Come, let us go to the Houſe of God,

God, or to the Houſe of the Poor, or to viſit the Sick, or our Friends; or to our Cloſet, Study, or Shop, and yet we will not go, what a ſchiſmatical contumacious Humour is this, when we thus divide and cut our ſelves off from the World, as every one does that neglects thoſe Opportunities, which things conſpire to make him? That's the Firſt.

2. The uſing of Opportunities proceeds from a good Principle, the loſing them from an ill one; and this argues the one to be good, the other bad. For ſuch as the Cauſes are, the Effects will be; the ſweet and the bitter Fountains will ſend forth Streams of the ſame Nature with their Sources.

Now if we trace them up to their Springs, we ſhall diſcover that all non-uſe of good Occaſions ariſes from ſuch Cauſes as theſe: Either Men are ignorant what makes a fit Seaſon, or inobſervant, or careleſs whether they do well or not; or ſlothful, that tho they be jogg'd, will not waken; or over intent and buſy on other Matters: As *Martha* was, *Luke* 10.42. when our Saviour told her ſhe was troubled, and careful about many things, which took her off from the Opportunity ſhe then had of hearing his Doctrine, which her Siſter gave heed to: Or, they are froward, and will not comply when things invite and call them.

On the other Hand; he that makes uſe of the Seaſons that are offered him, muſt needs be a prudent and careful Obſerver of things without him, diligent and intent upon doing good,

good, ſenſible of his own inſufficiency, and of the need he has of help from abroad. He muſt be a Man of great Vertue, and good Government of himſelf; a Man of an excellent Spirit, whoſe *Heart* is alway thus *fixed*, ſo as to give no ſtop, no check to things, but ſuffers them to have their free Courſe, ſtays not behind, but follows them to all that Good to which they lead him.

3. Conſider the Effects, which are or may be conſequent on our uſing, or not uſing the Seaſons that are before us. Great Good comes of the one, and as great Evils of the other: Indeed, no Man knows how great either may be. *Exempli Gratiâ*, The Bells call thee to Church, and no more neceſſary buſineſs keeps thee from it: thou goeſt, whither not only the Thing it ſelf, but the Seaſon invites; thou joineſt with the Congregation in Prayer, how knoweſt thou but God is prevailed with by the hearty Prayers with which thou art joined, and will beſtow upon thee the greateſt of Bleſſings, the pardon of thy Sin, the healing thy Diſtempers; or may ſupply thee in what thou wanteſt at preſent? Nay, and theſe Prayers ſhall be a ſtock laid up for thee in Heaven, and be remembred a great while hence, and on this ſcore thou ſhalt find opportune help in the day of trouble. Again; thou heareſt the good Word of God read, or explained; and thou attendeſt to it, and art enlightned in ſome Truth that will direct thee in thy way to Heaven: Thou haſt had ſome good Seed ſown in thy Heart, which will grow up to Eternal Life: Thou haſt

haſt been perſuaded of ſome good propoſition, which afterward becomes a principle of Wiſdom, and Vertue; and is indeed the Foundation of thy Happineſs.

On the other hand; Thou regardeſt not the Summons to Church; but either ſleepeſt, or drinkeſt, or talkeſt on, or followeſt thy Game, or that which thou calleſt thy Buſineſs, as if thou hadſt no other; and thereby, not only neglecteſt to honour God in the Aſſembly, but depriveſt thy ſelf of the great, thou knoweſt not how great Good thou mighteſt have received. Beſides, who can tell how many Temptations, and Snares, and Miſchiefs he has brought himſelf into, by refuſing to comply with ſo fair an Offer? Thou wouldſt not worſhip God in Publick, and it may be thou art ſerving the Devil in Private: Thou wouldſt not aſſociate with them that call upon God, and perhaps in the mean time thou art got into a rout of prophane debauch'd Revellers; and art fallen into Temptations from which thou canſt never get free; but wilt grow worſe and worſe, till thou beeſt irrecoverably bad? Thus, the loſs of one Seaſon may be the loſs of Happineſs, and thy ruine for ever. Take another Inſtance.

Thou haſt a fit Seaſon of Reproof adminiſtred to thee, *i.e.* Thou by thy Office, or by the Rank in which thou art, the Authority thou haſt over, or the Intereſt thou haſt in ſome Man, art fit to adviſe, rebuke, exhort him; and at this time thou art fit to ſpeak, and he to hear. All things conſpire

to

to make thy Reproof acceptable, and to give probability of Succeſs; at leaſt, there is nothing to diſcourage thee from attempting the amendment of thy Brother: If thou doſt now ſtrike in with the Opportunity, who knows what good may come of this? It may prove the recovery of a Sinner out of the Snare of the Devil, and not only be the ſaving of his Soul from Death, but the benefits will probably flow over to many others, his Wife and Children, his Friends and Neighbours, and as many as have to do with him who has hearkened to thy Counſel, ſhall be the better for it. Thou haſt by thy advice helped to reform him, and will not he take the ſame courſe with others that has been uſed with himſelf? And they likewiſe will propagate the Good to others, and who knows where it will end? Thus thou mayeſt have done a kind of infinite good, by laying hold of an opportunity of Reproof, and none knows but all this may be true of every one. Whereas if he neglects any one, he can't be ſure but that then he might have ſaid that to his offending Brother, which might have been his Reformation and Recovery; and the Omiſſion of which may prove his utter Undoing: For ought any Man knows by his neglect of ſome, of any one Opportunity, he has loſt not only one, but many Souls. Thus we ſee how great Good may come of uſing, and as great Evil by non-uſe of Opportunity. That's the third.

4. We

4. We must give an account to God of our Opportunities, and answer before the great Judg, how we have employed these Talents, and be doomed not only according to the Good we have done, but the Opportunities we have had. He that has done no more under more and fairer Opportunities, than he that has had fewer, will not then be able to acquit himself so well. Can he that has a thousand pound a Year, but gives no more Alms than he who has a hundred, hope for the same favourable Sentence from the righteous Judg? Undoubtedly the more and better Opportunities any Man has had of being, and doing Good, the more he has to answer for; and according to his improvement, or Non-improvement of them, will be his Sentence. To whom much is given, of him will much be required. One by his Learning, and Prudence, and Eloquence, and Riches, and Honour, and Friends, and Interest has great Opportunities of doing abundance of Good, which the ignorant and poor Man, who has no Friends, wants: And if the other does not improve his Advantages of doing the Good which he may, much more than this unlearned, poor, unacquainted Man of no Interest, he will not be acquitted by the Judgment of God.

5. Our Opportunities are but few, and those that are, are very uncertain; therefore neglect none. How seldom is it that things do so happily conspire into a Season? Therefore we should make the best of those few we have, and welcom that which comes

but

but ſeldom to us. If there be but one favourable Wind that comes at ſuch a time of the Year, the Seaman watches for it, he'll be ſure not to ſtay behind: But beſides, as the Winds and Tides of Action do not come at ſet-Times, ſo they have no fixed Periods, but are to us very contingent and uncertain. Now this ſhould make us ſtill more careful not to neglect them. For, when they are once paſt, we know not whether ever they will return to us again. The Wind goes and returns again into the ſame Coaſt; the Tides ebb and flow again after ſo many Hours: But if an Opportunity be gone, we cannot promiſe our ſelves that we ſhall ever have another.

I may add, that as Opportunities are but few and uncertain; ſo when they are, they are very ſhort and haſting away. All things are in motion, and no one ſtate of them is laſting, they are perpetually flowing, alway on the Wing; therefore make haſte to improve them: Think not only what we ſhall do, but be as quick to do what we think; not only reſolve, but perform what we reſolve preſently; put it not off till to Morrow, not knowing what a Day, what an Hour may bring forth; a few Minutes may make a great alteration in either us, or the things that make it opportune for us to act: And if either they, or we alter, our Opportunity is gone. Life it ſelf is but a ſhort and frail thing, and yet it is not one half of that, that is a time of action.

6. Some Opportunities once loſt, are loſt for ever, are irrecoverably gone. Indeed, in ſome ſenſe, all that are loſt are irrecoverable, for no power can make that which is paſt, not to be paſt: The Guilt I have contracted by ſuch a Neglect does, continue; and nothing can now hinder that I ſhould not have ſinned. But this is that which I mean, that ſome Opportunities are ſo loſt, that not only the ſame (which can never be) but none of the ſame kind, none like them ſhall ever be again. *Exempli Gratiâ*, I part with a Friend, he dies, or he falls diſtracted, or he is gone out of my reach; I had opportunity of ſaying that to him, which would have been of great uſe to him to have been told him. But now the time is paſt, and I muſt never more ſee him to acquaint him with it. Some ſuch there are, of which we can ſay, that they never will return again; and (which amounts much to the ſame) we cannot ſay of any that they will. I ſaw my Friend yeſterday, and had ſomewhat of moment to ſay to him, but I put it off till another time, yet am not ſure that I ſhall ever have another. I might this day have done a Kindneſs to ſuch an one, a good Office to another, but did it not, and it may be I ſhall not have another day to do, nor they another to receive it. Thus ſome Opportunities are loſt, irrecoverably loſt, and for ought we know all are ſo.

7. We have already loſt much Time, and many excellent Opportunities, wherein we might have done much good. Let this be an

an Argument to us why we ſhould loſe no more, but readily catch hold on them, as they offer themſelves.

Who is he that reviews the actions of one day, who may not tax himſelf either for his total neglect, or but half improvement of the Seaſons he has had? But alas! when we look over our Lives, how ought we to be abaſh'd for the many fair Opportunities we have had of benefiting our ſelves, and our Brethren; which we have moſt ſhamefully let ſlip? Nay, have we not abuſed, and perverted them? have we not only not done the Good to which they invited, and aſſiſted, but done the Evil which they hindred? Have we not hurt and miſchief'd, both our ſelves, and our Brethren, when we might ſo eaſily have done good?

If the caſe be thus for the time paſt, let us by this be perſuaded to be more careful for the future. Let the remembrance of the many good Hours ill ſpent, make us watchful leſt we fall into the ſame Guilt again. If the good Providence of God ſhall give us new Opportunities, let us not again fooliſhly and careleſly ſquander, or idlely ſleep them away, or frowardly waſte them; leſt we juſtly provoke God to deny us any more: Which would be a moſt terrible Judgment, and yet very righteous. We have loſt much time, never to be recovered; do therefore what may be done, to redeem what is paſt, by double diligence in improving the future.

Let me add, that the time is coming that we ſhall wiſh for one of thoſe many good Opportunities which we trifled away, when we come to our Death-Beds we ſhall in vain call back thoſe Seaſons. Let this Conſideration make us very careful not to neglect the leaſt occaſion of doing any good, becauſe we ſhall wiſh we had not.

Theſe Reaſons may be ſufficient to perſuade us not to neglect any, but to uſe every Seaſon of Action, that offers it ſelf to us. I now proceed to

2. Reaſons, Why we ſhould not only take Opportunity when 'tis offered, but endeavour to make it; and to change the things that are contrary to us, to be on our ſide, and ſerviceable to our good Purpoſes.

Now that I may evince the reaſonableneſs of this; Firſt, I will declare what is here ſuppoſed. Here are two things ſuppoſed, which if they be not true, then neither is this good Counſel, which is built on, and implys them; but if they be both true, then is it neceſſary: They are theſe.

1. That Opportunities are few.

2. We do very much, in our acting, depend on them.

1. The firſt of theſe I have already ſaid ſomething of, and I believe there is none who is not fully perſuaded of it. For what Man is he, who ſees not how ſhort his Life is? And of that little time, how much is taken for the maintenance of it? And when

when we are fit for Action, vacant for doing Good, how are our Hands held by things falling croſs to us?

We fall into Company by accident, or are conſtrained by ſome occaſions, to be with ſuch Perſons where we ſpend much time, but can do little to promote either their welfare, or our own. Whoſoever watches for, and is obſervant of Opportunities and Seaſons, he knows they fall out but ſeldom; he often finds things to be wind-bound, and tho he fain would, yet he cannot ſtir.

I do not mean by this, to juſtify the lazy and careleſs in their Complaints, who lay their own Neglects on want of Opportunities; for tho we have not ſo many, yet we are not quite deſtitute; we have ſome, tho not ſo many as the diligent Man could wiſh for; yet we have more than the idle will own, or care to uſe; and ſufficient for the doing that Good, which we are capable of doing, if we do but obſerve and make uſe of them: However, if the Sum total of them be computed, they may well paſs for few. If all our Life were a continued ſucceſſion of Opportunities, yet that being ſo ſhort, and ſo interrupted, they are but few at moſt. This is the firſt thing ſuppoſed.

2. We do very much in our Actions depend on Opportunity, this will appear if we conſider theſe three things.

1. Some Actions are not good if they be not done in Seaſon, and unleſs they comply with, and be ſuited to external Cauſes and Circumſtances. There muſt not only be an

agreement betwixt the Action, and him that does it; but it must also be suited to its Object, and accommodated to things without. *Exempli Gratiâ*, Reproof to an Equal, or Inferiour, that is not by Passion or Prejudice so possessed, as that what I shall say can make no Impression, is good: But when it is of a Superiour, or an Equal indisposed to receive it, 'tis not good; 'tis unfit and foolish, 'tis importune and unseasonable. And it is the same in most of the Actions of our Lives; if they are not opportune, they are not good. And this I may say of all, that the more seasonable, the better they are. This is one thing which shews our dependance on a fit Season. In this case, tho we could do Actions without it, yet we should not.

2. Other Actions, tho we may and would do them, we cannot. We must be helped from abroad, or of and by our selves we can do nothing. There is no Man such a Stranger to himself, and so ignorant of his own Insufficiency, but knows he has need of the concurrence of many Causes with him, to bring forth a good Action, besides the assistance of God's Grace, and all those many things that fore-pare a Man for Action, and make him big with it; there are more still that must help to elicit and bring it forth. *Exempli Gratiâ*,

Tho a Man be never so wise, and full of knowledg, and tho he have never so great a gift to communicate it; yet unless he meet with others, and those that are capable of it,

it, he cannot do what he desires, and is so well qualified to do. We cannot do the Good we would without the Help, the Midwifery of External Causes and Things, *i.e.* if we want Opportunity.

3. Tho we could, and should act without Opportunity; yet our Action would be very often without effect: For, in most cases, Success depends on the concurrence of those things that make Opportunity. A Man would not have good Designs and Performances prove Abortive, yet if they do not, he must be beholden to this: 'Tis this must bring what he does to good Issue.

As soon may a Man make a Voyage without a Ship, or Boat, or when he has one, against Wind and Tide arrive at his intended Port; as in most undertakings, have desired Success without the concurrence of external Causes. *Exempli Gratiâ*, Tho a Preacher use his utmost Skill and Care, to compose his Discourse for the benefit of those whom he expects to be his Hearers; yet if it so fall out, that they either cannot, or will not come to hear; or if they do come, yet fall asleep, or talk, or their Thoughts are taken up with other matters, that they do not attend; or if they presently forget what they heard, or never once consider it: that is, unless things conspire so as not to hinder from hearing, or attending to what they hear; from remembring and considering, at least, the drift and scope of the Sermon: He labours without Success, that made and preached it.

Thus it appears, that we act in dependance on such a happy confluence of things, as make a Season or Opportunity. And if this be true, and that also, that the Opportunities are few which offer themselves to us; then it will follow, that unless we will do nothing at all, or labour in vain, we must endeavour by our skill and diligence to make Opportunities, to make things as pliant to our Purposes, as serviceable to our Designs, as is possible. If the Mariner would never put out of the Harbour, nor weigh Anchor but when the Wind blows full in the Poop, he must lye still for the most part: And if we will never act, but when Opportunity favours us with a fair and full Gale; I doubt we shall be most commonly idle. No, but we must, when the Wind is not with us, make it serve us, by gathering it into our yielding Sails; and when it is full against us, yet we must then take the advantage of a Tide.

The sum of this is, That we must have help from things without us, both to act, and to bring our Action to some Issue. And things without us will not favour our Enterprises, unless we use our best skill and Endeavours to make them serve our honest Designs. But when times are ill, and things go cross to us, then especially are we to labour to serve our selves of them, and make them helpful to us.

Secondly; This is Wisdom to accommodate things, to make them comply with those

those good Purposes, which of themselves they thwart and oppose.

It is Wisdom to take the Occasions that offer themselves, but it's far greater to make Occasion, and to work things out of an opposition or unprofitableness, into a subserviency and usefulness to our Undertakings. It's great skill in the Mariner to sail with a Wind that's within one Point full against him.

I am apt to think there is nothing we meet with, but may be serviceable to a good purpose, and if we prudently and dexterously make application, it will be so; if not to one, yet to another: Nay, possibly to that which it may seem to oppose. *Exempli Gratiâ*, A Man is very impatient of any check, or censure in himself; but yet forward enough to blame and controul other Men (which often go together); In this case, to deal with this Man, as *Nathan* did with *David*, to lay the Scene in another place, and to cast the Fault on another Person. For he will not fail to aggravate that Crime in another, which he would spare in himself. But when he has condemned another, Natural Justice will not suffer him to be so partial, as to acquit himself. And thus, by a side-Wind, he comes to the Place whither he was bound, and makes use of that which was in it self Evil, and a Hindrance, to help him to attain his End. He makes an evil Thing promote a good Design.

I have ſaid enough for my preſent purpoſe, to ſhew, that it is Wiſdom to bring things that are croſs to us, to ſerve us; to make Enemies Friends, and of our Party; to make that which was a Neuter, and of no uſe, to be profitable. This is great Wiſdom. It is both the Effect, and Cauſe of great Wiſdom: It is the Exerciſe, and will be the Improvement of it. It is one of the greateſt and ſureſt inſtances of Wiſdom that can be given. No Man can give a better proof, that he is a prudent wiſe Man, than by making ill things ſerve good Purpoſes. Therefore if we would be, and ſhew our ſelves to be wiſe Men; let us, when things are not to our Minds, nor will fall in with our Deſigns, by our dexterous application, make them pliant and ſerviceable: That others may ſee, and admire this our management, and that both we, and they may receive the benefits of ſuch excellent Wiſdom.

3. To this I add, that to do thus is Divine and God-like. This is the Glory of God, that he can bring Light out of Darkneſs; Order out of Confuſion; Good out of Evil; nay, the greateſt Good out of the worſt of Evils: So that nothing, how bad ſoever, has fallen out, which the over-ruling Providence will not make to promote ſome moſt excellent Deſign. He ordinarily brings about not only the greateſt Ends by the leaſt, and unlikelieſt, but by the moſt oppoſite contrary means that are: And ſometimes delights to walk in difficult ways. Of

all

all which, I need but name that one instance of the *Salvation of Man.*

Now then, if this be the Glory of God, shall we not esteem it ours? Is it our perfection to be like God? Let us esteem it so, and endeavour to be like him in this; create Opportunities to our selves, make them to be, where there was none before. Let your contrivance bring them out of nothing, or that which is worse than nothing; That is, when all things conspire to oppose, and to hinder you from doing the good you desire, and intend to do; out of this very opposition make your selves a Season, and try to turn it into an Occasion and Advantage. Which if we do, we shall imitate that most adorable Providence, that accomplishes the Ends of infinite Goodness, by the services of things that are adverse and contrary to them.

3. If we meet with things that are unalterably evil, and by no prudence or care of ours, can be made for our purpose, or to minister to any good Action; we must then decline and shun them: Remove our selves from them, if we can't remove them from us.

The Particulars, when this may, and how it should be done, will fall under the Advices: I am only now to shew Reason why it ought to be done. And it will be sufficient here to mention the Principal, and indeed the Reason of all that can be assigned; and that is this, *viz.* That we may be in

in the beſt Capacity to do moſt good. For this cauſe we ought to walk accurately. For this we are to redeem the Seaſon in thoſe two foregoing Particulars, as well as in this.

And it is a very ſufficient and ſatisfactory Reaſon, why I ſhould by all prudent Care, and honeſt Diligence avoid thoſe unhappy Circumſtances, which will not only help, but hinder me in doing the good which I might in another Condition do. For this cauſe I muſt not fooliſhly throw my ſelf into, no, nor ſtay in ſuch a Condition as that, if I can by fair means keep, or get out. If I ſhould do otherwiſe, I ſhould do a vain, fruitleſs thing; I ſhould not put my ſelf to thoſe good Uſes, for which I may ſerve: I ſhould violate the Precept, and do directly contrary to the Reaſon of the Apoſtle's Exhortation, of *redeeming the time, becauſe the days are evil.* Which certainly ſignifies this in part, that we are to decline Dangers and Evils, not univerſally all Dangers in any ways, but only thoſe that cannot be improved into an Opportunity, either by our acting with, or ſuffering under them. If one way or other, they may be ſo managed, as to give us an occaſion of doing good: I do not think they are to be declined, unleſs it may be done honeſtly, to reſcue our ſelves into better Circumſtances that will aſſiſt us to do more and greater good.

This then is the reaſon why we ſhould ſhun thoſe Evils which we can't make pliant to our Chriſtian Purpoſes, becauſe we are to imploy our ſelves to the beſt Purpoſes.

I

I might add alſo, That to do thus, is but a compliance with a natural Inclination, which makes us averſe from (ſuppoſe) Poverty, Diſgrace, Sickneſs, Death, *&c.* Now the Deſign and Reaſon of this natural Inclination is, that we ſhould keep our ſelves in the beſt Condition in which we can be to do moſt good. For, all things are good, and therefore deſirable, ſo far as they give us an opportunity, or help us to do good: And whatever it is that is no way conducing, much more that is an hinderance to it, is evil. And it is on this account, and thus far, that we are to avoid Poverty, Sickneſs, Death, *&c.* whatever are incompliant with, unſerviceable to, and Hinderances of our doing good, or living the Chriſtian Life, and practiſing the Vertues which our Religion requires, we are to withdraw from and avoid.

I have done with the Reaſons, why we ſhould redeem the Seaſon, which all reſt upon this as their Baſis, *viz.* the great Utility and Neceſſity of our doing good, our exerciſing the Chriſtian Vertues, and the great ſerviceableneſs of Opportunity or Seaſon, and indeed the abſolute neceſſity of it to our doing good. Unleſs we do well, and live the Chriſtian Life, we cannot be happy, nor attain the End for which we were made; unleſs we have Opportunity, we cannot do well.

I proceed, in the third place, to ſhew what ſome of thoſe things are that deprive us of our

our Time, that hinder us from using it as we should. But I will bring that under the fourth Particular, the Directions and Advices.

Some of these are general and preparatory, others more particular and immediate. Again; some do more especially respect our selves and our Actions; others do primarily refer to the things without us, which make Opportunity. I begin with those that most expresly relate to our selves.

1. If we would lose no opportunity of good Actions, and make to our selves as many good Seasons as is possible, for the practice of Vertue; Let us endeavour after a clear and large Knowledg of all that is good for us to do; and strive to comprehend fully all that, which in our several Varieties of Circumstances and Conditions we are in capacity of doing. Whatever good it is which comes within our compass, whether in respect of God, it be honourable to him; or in relation to our selves, it be Perfective of our Natures; or in reference to others, it be beneficial to them; let us labour to understand this fully.

The Usefulness, and indeed the Necessity of allowing this Direction, appears at sight. For, whosoever is ignorant in, or mistaken about the Good he should do; how is it possible that he should lay hold on every occasion of doing it? We may as well suppose one who knows not what Port to make, to hoist up his Sails, and make use of the Wind when it blows: Why? He knows not which

which way to ſteer, and the other underſtands not what is the Good he ſhould do. He alſo is in the ſame caſe, who is miſtaken, and thinks that to be Good which is Evil. He will ſteer a quite contrary Courſe to what he ſhould. He will watch for the Seaſons of doing that Evil which he thinks to be Good; and will force things to ſerve him in proſecuting his Miſtake: and this is ſo far from making uſe of Opportunity to do well, that he abuſes and perverts it to do ill.

But this is not all I intend by this Direction: another Reaſon of it is this, left for want of it, we let ſlip the occaſion of doing ſome good or other. For he that underſtands not (or, which is the ſame, conſiders not) his Duty to God, how he ought to go out after him in Affection, and humbly and ſenſibly acknowledg him; he will neglect the many fair occaſions of Devotion, that continually offer themſelves to him. But he that comprehends fully not only that good which has Man, but that alſo which has God for its Object, will be out of this Danger.

2. Let's not only underſtand, but alſo be willing and deſirous of doing every good Work; without this our Knowledg will not ſuffice to engage us to let ſlip no Opportunities of doing it. If there be any that we have no mind to, we ſhall be regardleſs of the Seaſons of them; we ſhall rather ſhut our Eyes againſt them, than look for them: rather run and hide our ſelves away from, than ſeek after them. Let us therefore always

ways keep a willing Mind to do every good Work. What ſignifies Wind and Tide to him that is unwilling to take a Voyage? If I have no Mind to my Devotions, what will Health, and Leiſure, and a Cloſet, and all the things that invite me to that great Duty, ſignify? And tho I have every day the ſame Summons from things without me, yet 'tis all to no purpoſe; that Seaſon is loſt upon us, 'tis *a Prize put into the Hands of ſuch*, who have no Hearts to uſe it. Let us then be willing and deſirous, and that in no low degree, but let it be our chief Deſire, or main End and Deſign, to do all the Good we can. For, if it ſhall once obtain this place in our Hearts, we ſhall then both take and make all poſſible occaſions of accompliſhing this our End; we ſhall loſe no Advantage that can be had.

3. Nor muſt we only be willing and deſirous of, but ready and prepared throughly for every good Work. We muſt endeavour to furniſh our ſelves ſo, as we may be in a fitneſs of doing all that good, to which any occaſion ſhall invite us, *E. G.* To defend the Truth of my Religion, and to give any one that asks me a Reaſon of the hope that is in me; it is neceſſary that I ſhould not only underſtand that this is good and fit, and be willing to do it; but I ſhould qualify my ſelf for it, by a through Conſideration of the Arguments for, and the Objections againſt it; and I muſt, if I would not miſs an occaſion of doing ſo good a thing, endeavour to furniſh my ſelf throughly

ly with all those Abilities, and if I would perform it well also to keep that Temper which will fit me for such an undertaking, and give a Probability of Success.

Again; If I would improve every Season of doing good, I must, if I be poor, and not able to relieve my necessitous Brother, labour that I may have somewhat to give to him that wants, as the Apostle advises, *i. e.* I must take such honest ways as I can, and use such Diligence, that I may, when a charitable Occasion offers it self, comply with it, and do that good to my Neighbour, to which Opportunity invites.

The Reason of this Advice also is very plain: For, tho we understand, and have a Desire to do some good, yet if we be unqualified, not fit for it, the Opportunity will be lost notwithstanding. Tho a skilful Musician have never so good an Instrument in his Hand, yet it will make no Musick unless it be well strung and tuned; nor can we do any good, to which the fairest Occasions invite us, unless we be strung and tuned, throughly furnished for such Performances: therefore our Care must be to qualify and fit our selves with Abilities, and to be always ready for every *good Word and Work*, that none may come amiss to us, whether it be to convince, exhort, rebuke, perswade, or by innocent humour to divert and gratify those with whom we converse; or to hear and receive Instruction from, and be pleased by their Discourse.

When therefore we have a Comprehenſion of all the good we can do, and have a good mind to do it; we ſhould likewiſe endeavour to be duly prepared for the doing of it; that when ever our great Lord ſhall by giving us an Opportunity, call us forth to the undertaking, we may not, by our unfitneſs, diſobey his Summons. For, (to keep to our old Metaphor) if the Veſſel be not rigg'd, tho Wind and Tide ſerve never ſo much, they ſerve to no purpoſe: And if we be not ready trim'd, and our Sails up, in vain will Opportunity blow upon us; we ſhall ſtill lie in the Harbour, and make no Voyage.

Beſides; By being fitted for every good Work, if an Occaſion favours, we may readily ſtrike in with it: As, if things conſpire to make it both fit and eaſy for me to be alone, that I may imploy my ſelf in thinking, reading, writing, performing my Devotions to God, examining my ſelf, or the like. If I muſt be in Company, that I ſo behave my ſelf, ſo hearken to them, ſo diſcourſe with them, that, in one kind or other, I advantage both my ſelf and them; that where I cannot ſpeak to any good purpoſe in one Argument, yet if there be occaſion, I do in another; and where nothing that's proper, and of uſe can be ſaid by me, that I be ſilent, and as ready to receive Inſtruction from others, as I would be to give it to them.

There is no Condition we can be in, but preſents us with various Occaſions of ſeveral

good

good Actions. There are ſome Vertues that are proper for a poor and low, others for a rich and exalted State; Some for Diſgrace and Diſreſpect; others for Honour, and being well-ſpoken of; ſome for Sickneſs, others for Health, *&c.* If then we would loſe no Seaſon that ſhall happen, we muſt be furniſh'd and diſpoſed for every good Action: Our Furniture muſt be ready, we muſt have it *in promptu*, within call, for elſe time paſſes ſo faſt, that it may be gone from us before we be fit for it.

4. If we would be ſure to loſe no Seaſon of well-doing, we muſt be ſedulous and diligent, and in one kind or other, be always doing well. And that we may be ſo,

1. Let no Time find us idle, and doing nothing, but ever be at work: Let no Day, no Hour, no Moment paſs by thee unimployed. If thou ſhalt at any time obſerve, that thou art doing nothing, know thou haſt loſt an Opportunity: for there is no part of time which may not be a Seaſon for ſome Action.

2. Be not ill imployed. Let not thy Tongue be in motion to utter ill, to ſpeak wickedly, to tell Lies, to talk profanely or filthily. Let not thy Hands be haſty to work Miſchief, nor thy Feet ſwift in the ways of Wickedneſs. Idleneſs is a loſs of the preſent time, but to do ill (is not only that, but) a loſs of the future too; for ſome of that muſt be taken up in undoing that which I have ill done.

This is implied in this Direction, that we should neither be idle, nor yet evilly busi at any time; but ever be doing, and doing good in one kind or other: which if we be careful to observe, we shall be glad of all the help we can get, and so shall strike in with every Opportunity that offers it self. And when we have employ'd all such, we shall seek for more, and endeavour to find out such, as are not so open, and in some sense, to make them where they are not. This Influence will Diligence in well-doing have on us, to make us redeem the Season.

5. On the other hand; We must take care that we be not at any time immoderately, or confusedly busy, especially in the lesser matters. 1. By being immoderately busy I mean, that we should not so wholly lay ourselves out on one thing, as to make ourselves unfit for any other good Work; that we can neither observe, nor comply with any Season that would assist us in that other, tho it be better. For this I take to be the State that is best and most suitable to our Natures, that we be ever in a readiness to do good, as we have Opportunity. And, if we so busy our selves in some one particular, that either by being too intent on it, or continuing too long in it, we are disabled from, or hindred in doing other good things, we are over-busy. And of this we are to be careful in reference to Season, that we be not so imploy'd as to render our selves either inobservant of, or incompliant with it.

There

There are varieties of good Works, which we have to do, and there are Seasons for every of them. Now, if we be too earnestly, or too long taken up with one, or with some few of them; we must necessarily neglect the Opportunities which we might have for doing the rest.

2. As we must not be more busy about any thing than it requires and deserves: so we must take heed that we be not disorderly, and preposterously busy; but do those things first, which are in order to, and make way for the other. Let those Works be first done, which are either necessary, or at least do very much contribute to the doing of others.

Were these two things well observed, we should save abundance of Time, and have many good Opportunities, which by our being busy either beyond the proportions which things require, or without any order, we throw away.

Labour therefore to bring thine Actions into Method, that is, give Preference to the greatest and best, and do those first, which make way for, and on which others depend; and so do every day, begin with those which will make way for the rest.

6. Often consider, and be fully perswaded of the great Advantage, and indeed Necessity there is of our taking Opportunity: Whosoever observes how much we depend on it in our Actions, will be assured of it; and he that is, will not only lay hold on it, when it waits on him; but will with Care and Pains seek it, and endeavour by

all prudent Management to make an Oppor-tunity for himself.

Remember therefore, that it is Seaſo which makes ſome Actions good, that with-out it would be evil; and thoſe that woul be good without it, it makes better. It help us to do ſome Works, which without ſuc Aſſiſtance would not be done: And tho that might be done without its Aids, a more eaſily done with them. It alſo is ne ceſſary to give Succeſs to ſome of our Un dertakings; and it gives ſurer and greate Succeſs to them all. And if we are ſenſibl that it is of this Conſequence, ſurely we ſha not be careleſs of it.

7. Endeavour to underſtand clearly an diſtinctly the good or ill Influences tha things without may have on our Actions; and of the ſeveral ways in which they may be ſerviceable, or oppoſite, help or hinder our doing well: That is, underſtand parti-cularly what Advantages a Man receives from Riches in order to the Practice of Vertue: And what ways Poverty does of it ſelf, or may be made to miniſter to it. Wherein Liberty is profitable to a good Life: and how Reſtraint and Confinement may be friend it. Alſo of what uſe the Eſteem, and good Will, and good Word of Men is to our doing well: And how their Contempt and Hatred, and Reproach may be turned to its Advantage.

Thus let us acquaint our ſelves with the Advantages and Diſadvantages to Vertue, which are in every Condition; and which

are

are in all things, which make or ſpoil Seaſons. This will be a ſure Direction, and a great help to us to make the beſt uſe of all things.

To every thing there is a Seaſon, ſaith *Solomon, and a time to every purpoſe under Heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which was planted*, &c. *And God has made every thing beautiful in its time.* That is, at vvhatever moment there is ſuch a Conflux of things, as makes an Action good, becoming, beneficial, feaſible; that is the proper Seaſon, or time of it. And how wiſe, and good, and happy is he that underſtands the Seaſon of every thing, and neglects it not? Now the vvay to this Wiſdom is to obſerve the Influences which things vvithout us, and all Circumſtances have on our Actions; and vvhat Effects they vvill have in Conjunction vvith them.

That vvhat I have ſaid hitherto, and ſhall further ſay on this matter, may be more clear, and ſo find a readier Entertainment, I vvill here lay dovvn the followving Propoſitions concerning Time, and concerning the redeeming it.

1. By Time, (as I ſhevv'd in the beginning of this Diſcourſe) vve are here to underſtand Seaſon, or Opportunity, as, both by the uſual Signification of the vvord καιρος, and by the Senſe of it in this Text, is plain.

2. Seaſon is Time vvith reference to Action, *i. e.* as it does not hinder and oppoſe,

as it doth further and promote Action. Now because Time it self has no Influence, does nothing one way or other; therefore Time is, by an usual Figure of Speech, taken for its Adjuncts, for the things that are in, and with Time.

3. We are to understand the Action, to which the Apostle here refers, not generally for any kind, but only for good Actions, that Practice to which our good Religion obliges us.

This Time or Season may be distinguished thus in respect of its Influence on our Actions.

(1.) It is then whensoever it is possible for us to do Good, tho it be difficult, when things do not necessarily hinder us from doing that Good, which, of our selves, and in another Condition, we are in a Capacity of doing, this is the least that we call Opportunity.

(2.) When the Times, *i. e.* the Things that meet together in them, do not only not hinder, but in some measure help on a good Action, contributing somewhat to promote it. This is a better Season than the former. But,

(3.) That is the best Opportunity, when things do so conspire, and favour well-doing, that they make it easy to every good Mind: When not only Impediments are removed, and some things do co-operate with us; but the Opposites and Difficulties without us are so wholly taken away, and things do so universally conspire and joyn with us,

that

that if our ſelves be not, nothing elſe is wanting to our doing all the good, to which our Religion engages us.

Theſe are the three Differences of Seaſons in reſpect of the Influences they have on our Performances. We ſhould alſo diſtinguiſh them in reſpect of their good Actions, to which they refer, *i. e.* they may either be Opportunities; 1. Of doing all Good indifferently. Or, 2. Of this or that Good in particular. Or, 3. They may be general Seaſons, which yet do particularly favour and help on ſuch or ſuch particular good Actions: They do not oppoſe any, but further ſome.

And laſtly, we may diſtinguiſh Seaſons from their ſhorter or longer ſtay: from their being more or fewer.

All theſe may, and ſhould be conſidered by us, if we would know exactly how to behave our ſelves in reference to the Seaſon; if we would, as we are here required, redeem it.

From what has been ſaid, I may fairly deduce theſe two Corollaries,

1. Thoſe are good Times or Seaſons which do not hinder, but further us in doing good, living well and vertuouſly.

2. Thoſe are evil Times, which hinder us from doing the good which we are otherwiſe capable of doing; much more are thoſe ſuch, which do facilitate the doing wickedly.

Thus much concerning Time or Seaſon. I proceed next to the redeeming or gaining it. Which ſignifies the making it our own:

And

And also the making advantage of it. And that implies and refers to the using it to all those good Purposes to which it serves. For having and using are all one in Scripture-Dialect. This in General.

More particularly, and as 'tis to be understood in this place.

1. To do that good in any Time or Season, which it either assists us in, or does not hinder us from doing, is that which the Apostle aims at, when he bids us redeem the Time: And 'tis to be our design, when we do endeavour to redeem it. There can be nothing else but this intended: For if there were, it must be either, that we should have Time, and put it to no use, which can't be supposed; or that we should put it to ill use, and this none will imagine was meant by the Apostle. And then there only remains our putting it to good use.

2. But that's not all, that doing good is the only end of getting, of having, and of keeping time; but it is the only way and means to get, and save, and improve it. As some things perish in the using, so Time or Season is preserved, and improved in this use of it. Indeed every thing is then kept, when it is put to the use for which it serves. And 'tis the only way to preserve it, when we carry it on to its Perfection: that is, use it for those Ends for which it was made, and was fit.

Now, that this is that which we are to do, if we would redeem or gain the Time: To do the good which we then can, or can best do; which

which is moſt proper, and feaſible, or which is not impoſſible to be done by us. And that there is no other way to redeem it, will be evident, if we conſider, that whoſoever does not do thus, he loſes his Time. For, ſo he does, 1. Who ſpends it idly in doing nothing. 2. Who vainly attempts; who does much, but 'tis ineffectual, and comes to nothing; he brings nothing to paſs; he that's buſy to no purpoſe. 3. He that labours but for no good End, 'tis not Good that he deſigns. 4. Much more does he loſe the Seaſon, who imploys it in evil Works. Nay, 5. That Time is in part loſt, and not husbanded, as every one thinks it ſhould be, in which leſs good is done than might have been done in it. Tho a Man has been doing well, yet if he might have done much better, he is commonly thought, and ſaid not to have employed, and improved his time as he might, and is ſuppoſed ſhould have done.

According to this diſcourſe, doing well is not only the End and Reaſon why, but alſo the Way and Means, how we ſhould redeem the Time. And it is a plain Corollary deducible from hence, that the more and greater Good any Man does in Time, the more he redeems it. And he that does all that Good in it, which by Man can be done in ſuch a Time, he performs what the Apoſtle here requires moſt perfectly: He does his Duty fully. On the other hand, he who does leſs than the Times will ſuffer, or it may be help him to do, either doing ſome leſſer Good,

Good, where he neglects a greater, or doing but a part of a much greater Sum, which he might do, he does fail in his Obedience to this Exhortation of redeeming the Time, in Proportion to his falling ſhort of doing the good he might.

The Sum of all this is, That he who ſo complies with Things and Times, and as far as they are in his Power, ſo accommodates them to himſelf, as to do the moſt Good which they enable, or aſſiſt, or but ſuffer him to do: He does redeem the Time in the Apoſtle's Senſe. And thus far the Explication of it ſhews the reaſons of thoſe Directions for the doing it, which I have already given; and will make the entertainment of the few I ſhall add more eaſy.

Suppoſing then that we underſtand what is good for us to do, and that we are alway willing and ready to do this Good we know; and ever moderately, and orderly buſy; that we are ſenſible of our dependance on Time, and Things without us; and that we have got a good knowledg what influences they have on our doing good, to oppoſe, and hinder, or to farther and promote it, which is all that I have directed hitherto: I proceed now to another general Advice, which is this.

8. Take a view of all the Good, which Men in General, or your ſelf in Particular have a capacity of doing, in reſpect of human Nature and Faculties. Set before you, all in any kind, which one endowed with the Faculties of human Nature can poſſibly do;

do; which is fit and becoming one in such Relations and Conditions, as every Man is, to do in respect of God, of Himself, and of all other Men and Things, all that is honourable to the great Creator and Lord of all; that is perfective of human Nature in a Man's self, and in other Men; and conduces also to the welfare and best state of all other Beings and Things. Take a survey of Man, and of all of this sort that he is capable of doing; survey your selves also, what Good it is in particular that you can do: whether it be more or less than others in your Condition. Now this is all summ'd up in those general Heads, of doing *justly*, *loving Mercy*, *and walking humbly with God*, as the Prophet has expresst them: Or, as the Apostle more fully, *living soberly*, *righteously and godly*.

But this is not all I mean, that we should know all the Good that can be done by us; but that we also set before us all the Actions we can do, which are capable of being, and doing thus much good. And they are our Thoughts, and all those which are transacted by, and in the Mind it self; our Words which convey our Thoughts to others: And all our other mechanical Actions, vvhich directly, or indirectly fall under Liberty, and to vvhich vve may be determined by our Wills. Consider vvell, hovv fit and good all these may be; What is the Goodness of each of them singly, and of all of them together. And that you may know this, consider what respects they bear, and in what order they are to one another; how one

one does prepare and make Way for another; and consequently, when they do cross and oppose each other.

Consider also more distinctly, what Actions are the best, which are of less Goodness, which are of most, and which of least Consequence. This will very much direct us in what order to do them, and in case of Competition, which to prefer. This will hugely conduce to our gaining and improvement of Time, that is, to our doing the most Good, as I have shewn.

The Sum of this Direction is, that we consider (and that not slightly, and seldom, but often, and seriously) of all the Good we can do, and of all the Actions whereby we may do it. Let us hang a kind of Table before us, wherein the good Actions of our Lives (the Heads of them, I mean) may be fully enumerated and delineated in an orderly Series: And let this be in our Eye very often, every day look on it. Think of it so long, and so often, till you be perfect in it, and have no need of recourse to it; when your Memory shall presently and easily suggest it to you on every occasion: And when we consider what we can do, we must not only think what we can do by our selves immediately, but by other Men and Things. For tho we can't by our selves (suppose) persuade another, yet we may by some other that is abler, and has greater Authority with him.

There

There is none but may see the usefulness of this Advice, in order to our doing Good, in which Men so frequently and grosly miscarry, for no other cause but want of this Consideration. Tho they know all the Good they can do, and are willing and ready to do it, yet they do it not; they often do the contrary Evil, because they consider it not: they act prepostorously, and so hinder themselves. They do a less Good, when they might do a greater; they set upon the End before the Means. They do not the Good they might, if they would but take a full and distinct view of all they are capable of doing. *Seneca*, I remember, gives this Reason, among others, why Men do so grievously miscarry: *Quamvis sapissimè de partibus vitæ consulitur, nunquam de toto.* They seldom or never take all their Actions they can do into Consideration: They do not take a full view of their whole Course and Way, as they must, if they consult about it.

If this be so necessary in order to our living vertuously; 'tis on the same account necessary for our redeeming Time, which cannot be done but by well-doing: This being not only the only End why, but the only Means also whereby we can get and keep Time or Season.

9. Take also a general view of the whole Time you have, for all Good; as well as of those parts of Time, which will most befriend you in doing this, or that good in particular. If we observe this, it will be a great help. For when we consider in general,

neral, what time we have for doing good, we ſhall ſee the moſt we can reckon to be ſo very ſhort, and that little ſo very uncertain, that we ſhall not be able to put it under another account, than of poſſible, or not improbable: We can be ſure of none, but what is preſent. This will make us very careful to enquire, what is the beſt and moſt neceſſary of all the good Works we can do. And when we have found that, we ſhall be as diligent to do it with *all our might*, and without delay. Whatſoever *our Hand finds to do*, as *Solomon* expreſſes it, we ſhall do with our whole Strength.

He that is well reſolved that he can make no certain account of any Time, but of that vvhich is, vvill certainly be careful to employ that to the beſt and moſt neceſſary Purpoſes. And he that does this, has learnt one moſt excellent Rule for the redeeming his Time.

Let him alſo think before-hand, vvhat parts of Time do moſt befriend one good Action, ſuppoſe *Thinking*; vvhen it may be the fitteſt ſeaſon for *Speaking*, and vvhen for other *Actions*.

When you have thus conſidered your Time, think hovv you have ſpent it. And if you be ſenſible of miſpence; for the future reſolve on retrenching all your unaccountable expences of your Time: Such as you cannot juſtify to God, and your ovvn Conſcience; nor to any one that thinks every thing ſhould be put to a good uſe.

Ha-

Having thus ordered frequent Consideration, both of the good Actions you can do, and also of the Time you have to do them, and prepared your selves, Let your next care be to make, and keep a serious resolution of filling up every little space of time, with doing some Good or other. Let it be your constant care and study to be always doing Good of some Kind; that no Minutes be laid out on evil Words; no Time taken from you in Idleness; no Hours be spent on that which has so very little Goodness, that it is doubtful, or undiscernable. Many of our Businesses afford us abundance of spare Time, which a good Mind knows how to employ in divine Meditation, or the like.

The Naturalists observe that the same Vessel, when filled with Water, will yet receive Bodies of another Nature: And nothing more common than for one Body to incorporate and mingle with another. I am sure there is no Time but may be more employed than it is. And very few of our good Actions, the Goodness of which may not be condensated, and will admit of others of other kinds, and more of the same.

Be ever inclin'd and resolv'd to do as much good as you can; be not content to do little, but design the most; do not satisfy your selves to do good only, but still aim at doing the best. By this means we shall crowd more of Good into our Time. The same Ground, well husbanded,

will yield twice as much Corn, as if it were in the Hands of a Sluggard. And the same Time may bring forth twice as many good Actions, if it be well look'd to, as otherwise it would. Do as many good Actions together as thou canst: put as much Good into as little room as is possible: Do every Action as well as thou canst; make it as good as 'tis capable of being.

12. Allot the greatest and best, and first Portions, the most of your Time, to the best and most necessary Works, those which most tend to Man's greatest Perfection: Such are those that are requisite to the getting and keeping a good Mind and Conscience, and such a Plight of Body, as renders it most useful to the Soul, in all wise and vertuous Actions, viz. Consideration, being conversant in the Scriptures, in Prayer, in Christian Conference: All Acts of Justice and Mercy, &c.

13. Where there is an Equality on other accounts, that one Action is not apparently better than the other: Do that to which Season does most invite, Things will most assist in the doing it, and give Probability of best Success when 'tis done. The Reason of this Advice is plain, because by doing thus we are likely to do most good, and in a shorter time, than if we set our selves to do that which Opportunity does not so much favour.

14. Take the first Time or Season of doing a good Work; do not stay in hopes of a better, when, it may be, you may never have ano-

another. This is wise Counsel in any good Work, not to be dilatory, to procrastinate. But 'tis necessary in those that are inwardly and immutably good and eternally obligatory. Let no Conceit of present Difficulty put these off. Do not neglect a good Season, in an uncertain Expectation of one more convenient. Say not to good Works, as *Felix* said to St. *Paul*, *Go away for this time, when I have a convenient Season*, Acts 24. 25.

3. Avoid those things which are certain, and some of them double misspence of Time: Such are these.

1. Intemperance. Whosoever exceed the Bounds which Nature and Vertue has set to their Appetites of bodily Pleasures, they for a space utterly disable themselves from using their Time to any good purpose. And so they continue, till by Sleep or Abstinence they are recovered to their natural State: During which time, how many fair Opportunities of doing brave Actions have they lost?

2. Immoderate Passion: This does so detain the Soul in the Thoughts of some one Object, that it is wholly inobservant of any thing else that comes before it. Whilst I am over vehemently angry with one, I take no notice of another, whose Wants would otherwise move my Compassion. They do loudly call for my Charity, but I am so deaf with the noise of mine own Passion, that I cannot hear.

3. Wicked Company. Such will be saying, or doing ill things: There is some Danger that the Infection catch hold on me; and by sorting with them, I become one of them. Or, if by God's Grace, I be preserved from running into the same Excess with them; yet I may through Cowardise or Imprudence not rebuke them. By suffering Sin on them, I may bring it on my self. If I do rebuke them, it may be to no purpose, it is not likely to have any Effect. Thus if I be not Company-proof, I shall be snared. And if I be kept from falling into their Sins, yet I have lost some hours which might have been better spent in good Company, or in my Closet.

4. Courtship and Complement; great portions of Time are spent in these Trifles; by which I do not mean those Expresses of Civility, which become us to use in many cases: but, when we employ our Minds in studying to speak Words, or use Gestures, that are wholly insignificant, that do not correspond with the Sense of our Souls, that have no Truth on which they are bottom'd; that are used with a vain, with no good, perhaps with an ill Design. How idly, how unprofitably do they lavish away their time, who converse together in this vain, trifling, false, hypocritical manner, who as they are conscious, that no Credit is to be given to what they say, so neither do they believe each other? And to how little purpose do I converse with that Man, whom I cannot think he means as he speaks?

16. Be

16. Be very watchful of our selves in such Particulars, which if they be not regarded, do very much endanger the loss of Time. As,

1. Be careful we be not too prodigal of it in the Gratifications of our Senses, and the Services of the Body. Whilst thou art eating and drinking, take heed of devouring Time also: And spend not those hours in Sleep, or in dressing thy Body, which should have been laid out on thy better Part.

I do not by this put eating and drinking, sleeping, and dressing, into the vain Consumptions of Time. No, they are all very allowable things: But, this I say, that we have need to set a Watch over our selves, lest we spend more time in these things, than we can account for, than is requisite for them; so long as they are good and natural: Let us be doing other things, while we are doing these. While we are satisfying our Hunger and Thirst, let us discourse: While we are dressing our Bodies, let us be cloathing, and adorning, and sprucing up our Souls, by wise and good Thoughts and Affections. But do not do this profundo-rily, and by the by; for that's hateful, and a perverse piece of Folly, to let thy Soul have thy Bodies leavings: To do the Work of thy Soul when thou hast nothing else to do; to cast off thy refuse Minutes to it, and to allow it none other; to afford it only the few Minutes, which can be spared from the Services of the Body.

This may be an Instance, how the same Action may be very good and very bad, according to the Mind with, and the Principle from which it is done. He that lays his Bible before him, and fills up those Minutes with reading, and imploys those Thoughts about God's Revelation, which need not be laid out wholly in dressing: And does this out of the great Sense he has of the far greater Excellency and Necessity of one Work than of the other, he does well in this. But if these little Intervals of Time be all that are given to the Soul; and if he only cast off the Shreds of Time for the Soul, out of a Preference of the Body, this is hateful.

2. Beware of all diverting Exercise. Those Games which were invented on purpose to take off our Minds a while from more serious Employments, on which they could not be continually fixed, they after prove an infinite Expence of Time; and by a kind of Witchery do so insinuate themselves, and excite our Passions, and cause a tickling Pleasure, that they detain us much longer time than we can spare from important Business.

It is Wisdom in this case, to resolve before we be engaged in it, how long we will stay at such a Sport: And to be sure not to break our Purpose.

3. Compliance with general Customs. Some of these are great Devourers of Time. We spend many hours, and 'tis but very little good we do in them. I do not bid you be

be singular, and break such Customs; no, I suppose them innocent in themselves, and by my Care they may be so to me. All I advise is, that since they may not require a great, or constant Intention of Mind to use them, we let out our Thoughts after other matters, and lay hold on such Advantages of doing any kind of good as are offer'd.

2. Civil Visits: Such as are made by those who are not quite Strangers to each other, nor yet so well known, as to be Friends and Confidents. I do not suppose these to end in meer Tattle, much less in a saucy Discourse against their Governours, nor in slandering, or uncharitable detracting from their Neighbours, nor any such ill things as these, which is the worst Consumption of Time that can be. But if these Visits stay in general and innocent Discourse, yet we must be careful, that too much of our little Time, which more necessary things call for, be not laid out on these lesser matters. Let us also endeavour to improve these Occasions to the best Uses, of which they are capable.

3. Curiosities. They are things that require much Pains, and are of no great use. Now, if whilst we are in pursuit of these, we neglect something that is more necessary; if things of far greater moment call for that Time and Pains which we lay out on these Prettinesses, they prove the loss of our Time: and there is great Danger lest our Curiosity should engage us so far in the

queſt of thoſe *difficiles Nugæ*, theſe things that pleaſe, meerly becauſe they are rare and odd, and hard to come at; that we ſhould not mind the ſeaſons of doing better and greater things. Which if we do, we loſe the Advantage in part, for we do not do the beſt we might.

6. Converſation with Friends. It is commonly ſaid, *Amici fures temporis*; and there is ſome danger of it, as there is of every thing that hugely pleaſes us, leſt it ſhould ſo fix and chain our Souls to it, that they be not ready to fly away with the firſt Opportunity that calls to the doing ſome other, and more neceſſary Good.

This that I ſay, is no diſparagement to Friends; and which of all the things, the World affords that are without us, is of greateſt value. And there is nothing ſo pleaſant, ſo profitable, nothing ſo truly honourable, nothing that carries with it a ſignification of greater Wiſdom, and Vertue, and goodneſs, than to live in Friendſhip. And the more there is of this, the larger, the more univerſal, ſtill it deſerves a greater Praiſe. It is that, which, tho I am ſometimes falſely into the mention of, yet, I can hardly forbear to perſwade all Men to enter into, and to preſerve this moſt ſacred League.

Notwithſtanding, thus much I muſt intimate, that amongſt the other Miſcarriages you may by occaſion of it fall into, this is not the leaſt; That the moſt pleaſant Converſation of your Friend may ſo take you up, that you may be by this breach of the ſeaſon of

doing some more needful Good, which, it may be, whilst you are in those delightful Transports you have in the Enjoyment of him you love and trust, as you do your own Soul, passes away, and will return no more.

This Caution should be no more prejudice to Friendship, or bring us into any ill Thoughts of that, than if it were (as it might be) applied to a greater thing than Friendship, that is, Devotion, or converse with God himself, which is the highest Act we can put forth; yet we may be too long in the Mount. There are other Services to be done besides, though none so great as this.

17. Do not thy Actions by halves, nor so as thou shalt need to do them again. Strive to do every thing as well, as exactly as thou canst. And tho it may happen so, as that thou must do it again, however thou mayst be better able to do it than now thou art, yet this is all can be done to prevent it.

If we have considered the Reasons, why we should thus take every Opportunity, and be perswaded by them; we shall not only do thus our selves, but also endeavour that others, that all with whom we have to do, especially Children and Servants, may do so. And for that end, I can't give a better Advice, than that we should bring up our Children in some honest Imployment or other, not suffer them to live at large, to do this or that, any thing or nothing, what and when themselves have a Mind to it.

And

And for our Servants, who are at our disposal, that we should take care that they be neither idle, nor ill imployed. Let me also add concerning Friends, when we are with them, that as we ought to be careful, that they do not steal Time from us; so should we charge our selves, that we do not rob them of it, and by their Civility and Kindness to us, engage them to neglect their more necessary and important Affairs.

Thus far I have gone in general Directions, how we may not neglect any, but employ every Opportunity of well-doing that offers it self. The Sum is, Let us redeem as much Time from the less necessary Works, as is sufficient for our doing all those that are of greater importance.

I now proceed to offer some Advice, by what means and ways we should make Times that are adverse and opposite, to become favourable and serviceable to us, as we are Christians, that is, to the Christian Life, and to all that Happiness which we naturally and innocently desire.

And also where we cannot make them thus pliant to our Desires and Purposes, how we should avoid those Evils with which they threaten us.

That we may proceed more clearly, we will consider what *Days* may be said to be *Evil*, and what makes them so. And by this our way will be more plain, which we are to take, either to alter, or to decline the *Evils*.

1. Those

1. Those *Days* are said to be *evil*, which hinder us from doing, or enjoying that Good, which otherwise we might.

The *Evil* of them is in such things as these: Poverty, Reproach, and a bad Name, Slavery, Confinement, want and loss of Friends, Sickness, and Death, the Ignorance and Mistakes of many; but above all, Sin, of which there is greatest Danger. For, all the rest take Men off from doing Good, but Sin makes them also do Evil.

If we be made poor, we shall not be able to feed the Hungry, or cloath the Naked, or relieve those that are ready to perish, which the Rich Man can. And if we die, we are cut off from doing, or enjoying any more the Good of this Life: but if we commit Sin, and practise Wickedness, we not only do no Good, but we do that which is contrary to it, Evil. We not only deprive our selves of the Enjoyments that are innocent and natural, but we, by this, bring our selves under great Sufferings and Misery.

These, and such like, are the Evils of any Days. And the Divine Providence brings about all the rest, except Sin, either by natural and unseen Causes, which we do not know, or cannot resist: Or, by other Men, who either master us by their Power, or out-reach us by their Wit, or prevail with us by their Authority: Or lastly, by our selves, *i. e.* our own Folly, and Negligence, and Wickedness. Indeed the greatest Evils of any Times come from our selves. And

tho

tho Men generally complain of the Times, the Times; yet in many Cases, if they would speak truly and properly, they must blame themselves. For, they can't but observe, that other Men are, and they might be very good in those very bad Times, which they so much accuse. Our greatest Danger is from our Selves, more than from Times and Things without us. For, without our own Consents, nothing can make us sin: And if we escape Sin and Wickedness; nothing can do us much harm. If we keep our selves from doing Evil, we shall not fall into the worst of all those Mischiefs, of which we are in Danger from the Times.

1. Let this then be our first Care, that we do not make the Days evil; that by our own Ignorance and Folly, our Carelessness, and Viciosity, we do not bring those Evils upon our selves for which we complain of the Times.

Perhaps by your bad Example you have infected others; or by your ill, or for want of your good Counsel, some publick Persons are vicious, and their Vices have had Influence on the Generality, and the Age has been corrupted by this. And now you complain against the Times, when as your self are a great cause why they are so bad.

How many are there, who should turn their Accusation of the Times against themselves? They have, and do help to make good Times bad, and bad Times worse. They neglect their own Duty, and do not do the good of their Place; they are foolish

and

and idle, and careleſs, and vicious; and whilſt they are ſo, no Times will be good to them. They will never find a Seaſon convenient enough wherein to do well: Such a Temper as this, will turn the beſt into very bad Times.

Let us therefore, in the firſt place, take Care, that by our Wickedneſs and Folly, we do not change good Days into bad; nor increaſe the Evil of any Time. Under this general Advice we ſhall find moſt of, or all thoſe particular Directions, which I ſhall preſently give.

But ſuppoſing that the Times are bad, and we have no hand in it: Suppoſe them worſe than (God be thanked) they are, as bad as in any Age they have been, as we can well conceive them to be: Let the generality be given up to all Wickedneſs, not only debauch'd and ſottiſh in themſelves, but profane and irreligious towards God; and both uncharitable and and unjuſt, diſhoneſt and inhuman towards Men: But let us imagine the Wiſe, and the Learned, the Rich, and the Honourable to be hearty Oppoſers of, and Enemies to the Chriſtian Life and Spirit, and that they uſe their Wit, and employ their Knowledg, and their Intereſt in obſtructing the progreſs of Goodneſs and Vertue, as much as is poſſible. Nay, not only ſo, but they who hold the Scepter, by whoſe Counſel publick Affairs are managed, are violent Perſecutors of the Cauſe and People of God, and of all Goodneſs; and their Rage is bent againſt every one

one that is like to, and a Follower of the Son of God. Suppose you be in a Family where not only thy Fellow-Servants, or thy Brothers and Sisters, but thy Father and Mother, or thy Master and Mistris be not only wicked themselves, but Abettors of Wickedness in others. Let thy Case also be such, that thou, by being good, wilt not only be in danger to lose the Good-will of thy Equals, thy Friends, but of thy Superiours; nay, thy Governours will be ready to punish thee with Confiscation of Goods, Imprisonment, perhaps Death it self: Thy Name is cast out from amongst Men, thou art reckon'd as an Evil-doer, and art thought worthy to suffer all manner of Evils, which Men can inflict on thee. Let this be supposed to be our Case, which was the Primitive Christians; (but God be praised it is not ours, for we enjoy Peace and Liberty, we may be as good as we will; nay, and have many great Advantages and Helps to be good; yet since we have so very long neglected, and misimproved, and abused them, we know not what calamitous Times the Divine Providence may bring us into.) Now that we may be better prepared for the making such Times serviceable to our good Purposes, and making the best of all these Evils which may at any time befal us, so as to lose no Opportunity of doing well, which they may be conceived by any Care and Prudence of ours, to afford us, I will lay down some general Advices. The Sum of which is, that,

We

We must endeavour as much as is possible, i. e. as much as is consistent with Religion and Vertue, to conciliate the good will of all Men; to bring them into a good opinion both of our Religion, and of our selves: To make not only our Inferiours and Equals, the generality, the multitude, to think well of both; but also to strive to approve our selves, and to commend our Religion to the Rich and the Great, to the Learned and Wise, to Princes and Nobles, to Men of all Employments and Ways, in all Offices, and Relations, and Conditions. And that will be by doing those things, which all commend and esteem Good; by abstaining from those which every one accounts Evil, and blames; by being of such a behaviour as all approve and like.

This I am sure was the Counsel which was given to the first Professors of our Religion, to teach them how to carry themselves in those difficult Times in which they lived.

This is the Sense of my Text, and that which St. *Paul* seems particularly to have intended, when he bid them *walk circumspectly, redeeming the Time*; and that they should strive after an excellent knowledg of the Will of God: All which seems to have particular reference to the *Evil Days*.

In a parallel place (which we mentioned in the beginning) the Apostle calls upon them to *walk in Wisdom towards them that are without, redeeming the Time*; which plainly imports, that they should have such a Consideration

ſideration of the *Excuſes*, the Infidels, that by their Carriage towards them, they might gain from them thoſe Advantages and Seaſons, which were requiſite for their doing the Good which their Religion enjoyned them.

This is the general Advice. Strive to adorn your Profeſſion, to commend your ſelves by that which every Man approves. Commend your Religion, which you will do, if you can but make it appear. And therefore give a true clear repreſentation of it in your Diſcourſes, and then it will carry its own defence with it; every Man will be convinced of its Goodneſs. But eſpecially, ſhew in your Converſation the excellency of this Wiſdom. Let it appear by the admirable Effects which it has on your Spirit and Behaviour, that it is a moſt divine thing, in that it keeps you from doing that which is Evil, and engages you to do that which is Good and Honeſt in the ſight of all Men. But

What is that *honeſt Converſation* which St. *Peter* exhorts the Chriſtians to have *among the Gentiles, that whereas they ſpake againſt them as Evil-doers, they might be aſhamed*, who did falſly accuſe the Chriſtian Life? 1 *Pet.* 3. 16. I anſwer,

Tho, it may be, ſome Men are ſo greatly corrupted, and become ſo much either Brutes or Devils, that there is very little of that which is truly Good that they will account ſo: Yet, I hope, there are not many of theſe Monſters, and that there will very few be found, who do not entertain a good opinion of the Men,

1. Who

1. Who are Innocent. Which therefore our Saviour thought fit particularly to recommend to his Diſciples that were to be among *Wolves*. *Be harmleſs*, ſays he, *as Doves*. Innocence has a certain Charm in it which compoſes Rage and Fierceneſs, and caſts a Damp on the fury of a Perſecutor. Hurt no Body in Word, or Deed; This is the likelieſt way to procure ſuch ſafety to your ſelves, that none will hurt you. For who will be an Enemy to him, that is an Enemy to no Man?

2. If you would eſcape the ill-Thoughts, and Oppoſitions of Men, be humble and modeſt. Do not aim at things too high for you. Do not undertake what you are not fit for, keep within your own Compaſs. Do not ambitiouſly contend with more worthy Men, thoſe that are more fit for a place than your ſelves. Do not graſp at every thing, whilſt you can do little or nothing; for ſuch a Carriage as this makes every one your Enemy: Whereas if your Deportment be ſuch, that it ſhews you think of your ſelf as you ought, it will conciliate every ones Eſteem.

3. To be mild and patient, is not only in the ſight of God, but of Men alſo, very valuable. *Soft Words*, ſays *Solomon*, *will turn away Wrath*. And common Obſervation aſſures us, that nothing does ſo blunt the edg of a ſharp Anger, as a meek Behaviour. If the Man of Fury will begin to afflict ſuch a one, yet he can hardly continue; the edge will be ſoon taken off, and his Malice gro v

weary, when it is not animated, and enraged by an angry Oppoſition. The firſt Chriſtians wearied the Rage of their Perſecutors by their Patience.

4. I adviſe to hearty and univerſal Good-Will. He that would be hated by none, muſt himſelf hate none. And he that would be loved by all, muſt love all.

Nor is good Wiſhes, and a good Will, and good Words all that I mean by Love: But all ſuch good Deeds as thou canſt do. Where thou art fit to give it, and others capable to receive it, counſel, admoniſh, reprove. Where thou haſt an Eſtate, and ſeeſt thy Brother in want, relieve him. And by the way, Is not this the likelieſt courſe to ſecure thy Eſtate? For when every one knows that thou uſeſt it to the beſt Purpoſes, that thou neither oppreſſeſt thy Neighbour, nor yet hoardeſt up thy Treaſure, but putteſt it to the beſt uſes, feedeſt the Hungry, cloatheſt the Naked, ſupplieſt the neceſſities of the Poor, layeſt it out on ſome publick Works: Who will go about to wrong thee of that Eſtate with which thou doſt ſo much good? Or if there be any ſuch Monſters, yet the Generality will be on thy ſide. He muſt be a great and covetous Tyrant, who will take away an Eſtate that does ſo much Good. And what Man is he who will abridge thoſe of their Liberty, who make it appear that they do not uſe it as a Cloak of Maliciouſneſs, but as an Opportunity of Beneficence. In ſhort, the Man of univerſal Good-Will obliges all. And he muſt

muſt be very unnatural that can be an Enemy to him, who is a Friend to every one.

5. And when I have ſaid thou ſhouldſt be loving and kind, merciful and liberal; I ſuppoſe thee to be juſt and honeſt, true and faithful: That thou wilt wrong no Man of his Right, withhold from no Man his Due; but give every one that to which Law, and Cuſtom, and Equity has given him a Title. That thou wilt keep thy Word, and ſtand to thy Bargain, make good thy Promiſe, and be faithful to thy Truſt. If thou wrongeſt not other Men, they will not lightly wrong thee. And by being juſt and honeſt to all, thou takeſt the likelieſt way to make them ſo to thee. Give every Man his, and this will induce all others to give thee thine: To do to thee, as thou doſt to him.

6. Be quiet and peaceable, not quarrelſom and contentious with your Neighbours. Be united, and as far as is poſſible, live peaceably with all Men, be of one Heart, and Mind, and Way; do not diſagree with them without neceſſity. And where there is diſagreement in ſome, either Opinions, or Practices; yet let it be managed amicably, ſo as not to cauſe a Breach, a Diſtance, but converſe together, as thoſe that agree in the moſt and greateſt matters, tho you differ in ſome. Make it appear that your ſtudy is to be quiet, and your deſign to live in Peace.

Let all the Vertues which fit Men for Society, which are neceſſary to its Being, and

contribute to its Proſperity, ſhine forth in your Converſation.

In Particular; *Obey thoſe that have the rule over you*, obey them univerſally, where their Commands do not interfere with God's; and where they do, and your Allegiance to the Sovereign of all the World challenges your Obedience to his Law, yet even there, where you deny ſubjection to your Earthly Governours, let this be done with that Humility and Quietneſs, and with that becoming Reverence to them, that they may ſee it is not from a perverſe, peeviſh, froward, humourſome, untractable Spirit; nor from the ſcrupuloſities of an anxious, and unſatisfiable Mind, that you do not comply with their Injunctions: But that it proceeds from the clear and fixed Reſolutions of a well-informed Mind, a Conſcience that is inſtructed to give God that which is his, and to Man that which God has given him. Which when it ſhall be evident to them, if your Governours have any thing of Humanity left; they will be inclined to favour you.

By theſe, and ſuch like things, it came to paſs that the twelve Fiſhermen vanquiſh'd the World, and overcame all thoſe ſeemingly inſuperable Difficulties: That the plain ſimple Religion of our Saviour, took place both of the Jewiſh, and the Pagan.

The excellent Spirits, and Lives of Chriſtians, did more to the Converſion of the World, than all the Miracles which they wrought. It was their Vertue and Goodneſs, that made their Enemies become their Friends,

Friends, and that put an end to their Perſecutions. It was their Innocence and Meekneſs, Humility and Love, Juſtice and Peaceableneſs, and Obedience, which got them favour with their Governours, and procured them eaſe and reſt, and all thoſe things which an Opportunity of doing Good does imply.

Thus we have a verification of theſe Advices. We have ſeen an illuſtrious proof of their Truth. They who have done thus, have redeemed the Seaſon, by theſe ways they gained Opportunity, not only for themſelves, but for us alſo. And that we enjoy ſo much Freedom and Wealth, and are not perſecuted to Death for our Religion, we muſt aſcribe to the innocent, holy and uſeful Lives of the firſt Chriſtians. This ſhews the ſufficiency of the Advices I have given, when they were obſerved, they proved effectual. To theſe let me add ſome others.

1. Let us endeavour to be uſeful, and ſerviceable to the Publick; that the place where we live may not know how to be without us. This many times has ſaved the Life of a Malefactor; How much more will it expiate a ſmall Offence? Nay, not only ſo, but this is the way to obtain Liberty, to raiſe an Eſtate, to gain an Intereſt, *i. e.* to redeem a Seaſon of doing more Good.

2. Do your own Buſineſs, meddle not with other Mens Matters, be not buſy-Bodies; be diligent to do your own Work, that which your Place and Station requires of

you; but be not forward to thrust your ſelves into other Mens Affairs, leſt you engage in that which you do not underſtand, nor are able to perform.

This medling where we are not concern'd, is a great loſs of Time; not only, as it takes us off from that which we can beſt do, our own Work, and puts us on what we underſtand not ſo well, nor are fit for: But alſo, as it brings us into diſeſteem with Men (who generally think ill of a buſy-Body) and thereby makes us loſe that Opportunity, which their no ill Opinion of us would have afforded.

But if we take upon us to be Governors, nay, to be Superior to, and to judg and cenſure them; we by thus invading the Throne, and offering to wreſt the Scepter out of the Princes Hand, make it neceſſary for them to curb our Inſolence. Whereas he that keeps himſelf within his own Bounds, and is diligent in his own Affairs; he is eaſy and profitable to the Government, under which he lives, and no Man can be angry with him.

3. Be not over-Talkative. *A Man full of Words ſhall not proſper: And there is a Time when the prudent Man will hold his peace.* But, if Men in their Diſcourſes, ſpeak evil of their Neighbours; much more, if they blaſpheme Dignities, and revile the Rulers; they many ways offend againſt this Precept of *redeeming the Time.* For, 1. They are doing Evil themſelves. 2. They, by this, hinder others from doing the Good they would

would have done, if they had not been ſlandered, or reproached. 3. They provoke thoſe againſt whom they ſpeak, and make themſelves obnoxious to their Governours: They have made it neceſſary that they ſhould be puniſhed, in one kind or other, for Peace-ſake.

4. Do not affect Singularity in Humour, Garb, Carriage, or any little things: But be like to, and converſe with others, and comply with all the old innocent Cuſtoms of the Places where you are. Where Men do thus, they are not ſuſpected of Innovation, as the affecters of Singularities are by the Government. This we know was the way of our Saviour, and of his Apoſtles.

5. Be Civil, and Courteous, and Affable to all Men. And where they either do not want, or you cannot do any thing that's greater and better, yet be not wanting in theſe ſmaller Offices. Theſe little things, ſometimes, lay no little Obligation on Men, and they will hereby be brought to a good Opinion of you.

Theſe are ſome of thoſe Counſels which I would give, that we may gain Seaſons of doing well in evil Days.

But if things will not yield, or become pliant to our Purpoſe, if we cannot by all the honeſt Arts we uſe, gain the good Will, nor yet free our ſelves from the worſt Evils that the Malice of Men may bring upon us: We have then but two things to do,

1. To withdraw our ſelves from the Dangers that threaten us, if this may be

done handsomely, and creditably: Or if we cannot,

2. To encounter the Dangers, which we cannot escape, with that Courage and Constancy of Mind, that becomes the Followers of the Blessed Jesus; those who have Faith in God, and believe them to be Blessed, who suffer in, and for well-doing. By this means, we may make our Deaths an Opportunity of doing more Good, than if we had lived many Years, we should have done. And so shall *redeem the Time, &c.*

What I have said of the Wickedness of the Times, refers to the Wickedness of other Men which may endanger our falling into Sin, and will make us less successful in doing good, than otherwise we should be.

The Directions which I have given are not sufficiently particular. It will be useful to consider very particularly, how I should behave my self in this, or that, or the other Difficulty. To follow the Examples in Scripture, how my Saviour, St. *Paul*, and others behaved themselves before Magistrates, with Hypocrites, and with open Sinners; and in the Extremities of Dangers. It is not for me to give many particular Advices; Your own Prudence in present Straits will suggest them. Only let me put you in mind of this, That you use no Arts, for your delivery from any Evils, which do not agree with the Faith, and Truth, and Honesty that belongs to all Men; which are not fairly consistent with, and well-becoming the Religion of a Christian, the Affection and Faithful-

neſs of a Friend, the Duty and Loyalty of a Subject; and whatever Relation, or Condition you are in.

1. Reſolve never unneceſſarily to expoſe ourſelves, our Lives, Fortunes, Names to the Malice, and Rapine, and Cenſure of private Perſons, who are uncharitable: Or of publick Perſons, who are notoriouſly unjuſt, or rigorouſly juſt. That is, avoid all needleſs, fooliſh, hazardous Buſineſſes, Quarrels, and Oppoſitions by acting, or ſpeaking about other Men's Matters, where we have nothing to do; much more doing or ſaying any thing openly and directly againſt their Perſons, Intereſts, Ways, or Opinions: When a more tacit, and conſequential way will probably do what you intend, more effectually. Not always railing at the (ſuppoſe) Idols, and falſe ways of Worſhip, which other Men uſe: But taking fit Seaſons to ſignify our diſapproval of them. *Neither againſt the Law of the Jews, neither againſt the Temple, have I offended any thing at all*, ſays St. *Paul*, *Acts* 25. 8. *He that would ſee good Days, let him refrain his Tongue from Evil*, 1 Pet. 3. 10.

2. Make it appear that there is no ſuch great difference betwixt you as is thought. That you agree in many, and thoſe the moſt material Things. St. *Paul* ſhew'd, that the Heathen Poets conſented to, and bore witneſs to the Doctrine of Chriſt, *For we are his Off-ſpring*, *Acts* 17. 28.

3. Where you can't make this appear concerning the whole number of your Adverſaries,

saries, yet if you can, do it of a part of them; do this, and you will divide them: So St. *Paul, concerning the Resurrection of the Dead,* &c. *Acts* 23.6, 7, 8.

But thus much may suffice for the second Proposition, which I propounded to discourse of, *viz.* That Christians ought to make the best of bad Times, when they fall into them.

I proceed now to the third and last Proposition in the Text.

A DISCOURSE OF *Understanding the Will of God.*

Of the Third Propoſition.

EPH. 5. 17.

Wherefore be ye not unwiſe, but underſtanding what the Will of the Lord is.

CHriſtians ought to uſe their beſt Endeavours to underſtand what the Will of God is: This appears from the Apoſtle's Exhortation in thoſe Words, *Wherefore be ye not unwiſe, but underſtanding what the Will*

of

of the Lord is. The Relation which these Words have with the foregoing, is intimated to us by the word *Wherefore* (διὰ τοῦτο); it is as if the Apostle had said, That you may *walk circumspectly*, or accurately, as becomes Christians; and that you may *redeem the Season*, not needlessly exposing your selves to Dangers, but using all prudent, honest ways to secure your selves, and gain Opportunity of doing the Good, your Religion obliges you to: Be not imprudent, as those are that are either ignorant of, or mistaken in *the Will of the Lord.* But on the other hand, endeavour after a very perfect understanding of it: that so you may not think your selves under Obligations to do that, which he does not require of you; nor yet be careless of doing that which he does require: and by both ways be betray'd into the Dangers which threaten you, but that your Practice being directed by this exact Knowledge of the Divine Will, you may, as much as is possible, escape the *Evils*, of which the times are full; and gain to your selves the best Advantages for good living that you can have.

Our well-doing and well-being does very much depend upon our Knowledge: It is indeed a very principal Ingredient of our Goodness and Happiness. Without it, says Solomon, *the Heart cannot be good*, that is neither vertuous nor quiet.

Now, there is no Knowledge of greater importance to Man than the Knowledge of the *Will of God*: For, this is the Rule of all our

our Actions, the limits of our Deſires, the direction of all our Counſels.

God's Will is the guide of ours. And as we cannot reaſonably will any thing contrary to what God will's: ſo it is our Safety, and our Wiſdom and Perfection to will nothing elſe.

This Knowledg has the greateſt influence upon the good government of our Lives. And whoſoever is without it, he cannot expreſs that regard to the great Governour of the World which he ſhould.

To be ignorant, or to be miſtaken, in a matter of this moment, is of fatal conſequence. And yet I doubt we are not, generally, ſo careful in this as we ought, as it is our intereſt to be. There are few that cry ſo earneſtly, and ſo often as *David*, *Lord, teach me thy Law, —— thy Judgments, make me to underſtand thy Teſtimonies.* And where is he to be found that has made this his Enquiry, What is *the Will of God?* Tho we daily pray that *God's Will may be done*, yet we conſider nor what that Will is: We pretend to be doers of it, tho we know it not.

But, ſome may be diſcouraged from ſeeking after this Knowledge, as if it were utterly impoſſible. For, what Man is he that can pretend to know the Will of another Man? And how then ſhall he underſtand the Will of God?

It may be ſufficient to remove this Objection, if I ſay, That by *the Will of God*, in this place, we are to underſtand only that, which he declares he would have Man to do, or ſuffer.

Now

Now, though it cannot be conceiv'd, that Man's Mind ſhould comprehend all the Deſigns and Determinations of the Will of God, and his whole Counſel: innumerable of which, are above our comprehenſion, or belong not to us, and, on one account or other, are, and for ever will be hid from us: Yet as far as we are concern'd, and it may be of advantage to us to know it, God has reveal'd his Will to us. And that is, eſpecially, what it is that he would have us to do; and what will be the iſſue of ſuch a behaviour, or of the contrary to it.

Before I give an account, how and in what ways this is made known to us; I will take notice of this Expreſſion, *the Will of God*, which the Scripture ſo often uſes for his Law. I infer from this, That it is indeed that which God wills, that we ſhould conform to his Law, do what he has commanded, abſtain from what he has forbid.

It is really the Will of God, that Man ſhould live as God has declared he would have him. This is God's Pleaſure, that which he deſires and delights in. And whoſoever does not thus, he, in the uſe of his Liberty, of and from himſelf, that ſelf-moving power with which he is endow'd, oppoſes and contradicts the Will of God.

I mention this the rather, becauſe of ſome ill Expreſſions, which have been in great uſe, that may lead ſuch as are unwary, into great and dangerous Miſtakes. As when Men diſtinguiſh the *bene-placitum*, or good pleaſure of God, from his *preceptive* or commanding Will,

Will, and call this only an expreſſion, or ſignification and a ſhew of his Will: as if this were not his real Will and Good-pleaſure.

For the clearing up of ſuch difficulties as theſe, let us conſider, that tho we may diſtinguiſh the Will of God from its Objects, and the various matters about which it is, yet in it ſelf it is but one ſimple thing. God has not a Will and a Will, two Wills, unleſs we call the willing two Things two Wills. Much leſs are we to imagine the leaſt ſhadow of Contradiction among the ſeveral acts of the divine Will: This were an Imperfection not eaſily to be faſtened upon a wiſe Man.

But neither this, nor any other thing that is inconſiſtent with the acknowledged Perfections of the God-head, ought to be ſuſpected of the Divine Will. God cannot will that which is contrary to his own glorious Nature.

If we be perſuaded of theſe two things (which I think are clear in their own Light.) 1. That God cannot will inconſiſtently with the perfections of his moſt excellent Nature, that Wiſdom and Knowledg, that Juſtice and Goodneſs that are eſſential to him. And 2. That one act of his Will can never contradict, nor is in the leaſt repugnant to another: This may be of good uſe to preſerve us from ſome dangerous Opinions, which have been held in theſe latter Ages: We ſhall never attribute to God unjuſt Decrees, nor impoſſible Commands.

I do not enter into the main Controverſy, but yet thought fit on this occaſion to ſay thus much, leſt any one ſhould think that God does not will what he commands; that it is but a ſhew he makes, when he gives his Law, as if he really will'd that Man ſhould not obſerve it: A Thought moſt unworthy of God.

I muſt not go on in this Argument now. I hope enough has been ſaid to my Purpoſe, and that no Man will queſtion whether that be indeed the Will of God, which he has ſo often, and ſo plainly told us is his Will: I mean his Law.

I therefore proceed to ſhew, by what means, and in what way Man may come to as perfect a knowledg of this Will of God, concerning his Actions, as can be: That he may know it with as much clearneſs and certainty, diſtinction and particularity, as fully and adequately, as is poſſible. Alſo that he may not only have a poſitive and abſolute, but a comparative and relative knowledg of God's Commands, which are the greater, and which the leſs weighty matters of the Law: What reference the ſeveral Precepts bear, and in what order they are unto each other.

We are commonly told of two general ways, wherein this Knowledg is attained, which are thus expreſſed; the Light of Nature, and of Grace, or Reaſon, and Faith. Neither of which exclude, but indeed imply Senſe, both inward and outward.

I shall not consider these distinctly, but shall shew at least some of those ways, wherein God discovers his Will to us Men. As,

I. The Manifestation he has made of himself, and the adorable Perfections of his own Nature. When we understand a Man's Temper and Humours, his Inclinations and Way, we are better capacitated to know what it is that he wills.

II. By the Works which he has wrought, he has made farther discoveries of his Will; but especially by Man himself: the Nature and Faculties which God has given us, are a certain Indication to every one that will consider them, what our Creator would have us to do.

III. The consent of the generality of Men, and of the wisest and best, universally, that such or such things are the Will of God, is a farther publication of it.

IV. The Declarations of Men divinely inspired. God has in sundry Ways and divers Manners revealed his Will to some Men, and by them to others; the Records of which we have in the Books of the Old and New Testament.

V. God does by secret Suggestions, and Teachings of his good Spirit, convey into Mens Minds the notice of his Will; by these he brings to remembrance, or shews us in particular, which is the way he would have us to go, and which to avoid.

These are five Ways wherein God declares, and whereby we come to know his Will, and our Duty.

I. Then we may learn what the Will of God concerning us must be, by what he is in himself. For such as he is, such is his Will; it being altogether unconceivable that he should will that which is repugnant to his Nature, or do any thing unnaturally.

Now God has so far manifested his own most glorious Nature, that all Men (who consider) know him to be essentially and immutably wise and good, holy, and just, and true. God is not conceivable without these Excellencies, they are the Properties which every one ascribes unto him. And if these be intrinsical to, and as it were constitutive of the divine Nature it self; then they will have influence on, and be derived upon his Will, and all his Works. And consequently, his Law must necessarily be holy, and wise, just, and true, and good. Yea, not only that, but all whatsoever he wills and does, will certainly be thus qualified.

Again, If these be the essential Properties of God, as by his Power and Goodness he is communicative and willing to impart, so he must impart of that which is his, and consequently his Holiness, &c. He will use the Methods that are proper to make his Creatures partakers of this divine Nature, so far as they are capable. And then (as we shall see under the next particular) he will give to Man a holy and righteous Law.

From

From this Consideration of the Divine Perfections, I infer two things to our present Purpose.

1. That God can will or require nothing of us, which is not wise and good, holy, just, and true. So that if any thing pretend to be of God, which is not thus qualified, it wants sufficient Credentials. If it make shew of divine Authority, but is manifestly foolish, unquestionably evil, impure and filthy, unjust and false, it is not required of us by God, all whose Ways are Holy, and his Works Righteous, all that he does himself, or commands us to do.

2. That he does will all that is wise and good to be done. As he can will nothing that is not, so he does certainly will all that is. As he knows it all, so he must be allowed to will it all. For else we impute defect and imperfection to God, by supposing him to know that Good which he does not will: We should by this make his Goodness less than his Knowledg; and his Will not to follow, but to fall short of his Understanding.

So that this Consideration does not only afford us a Character, whereby we may distinguish betwixt the true Will of God, and that which pretends to be it, but is not: But we have also direction to find out what that is which God does will and command. In general,

If there be any action that is wise, that is good, that is holy and just, and if there be any Truth; we may from hence be assured

what is the Will of God. For as he can't will the contrary to these, so he cannot but by a kind of necessity of his own most excellent Nature, will all these.

From this Knowledg which the Heathens had of God, the wise among them have excluded all Impurity and Impiety, all Folly and Injustice from Religion.

If then we have an assured knowledg of what is wise and good, holy, and just, and true (as we all have) we understand withal what it is that God wills we should do: So certain as thou art that any thing is fit and becoming, beneficial and profitable; so certain mayst thou be of the divine Will and Law. For *It is Good*, and *It is the Will of God*, are two Forms of Speech of the same import. *He hath shewed thee, O Man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of thee? &c.* Mic. 6. 8.

This is the first way whereby we come to the Knowledg of what God's Will concerning Man, or his Law to us is, by the Knowledg of what is wise and good, *&c.* Purity, Justice, Truth, Wisdom and Goodness are most certainly concluded by us to be things which God wills should be in us, because they are all Perfections of his own most excellent Nature. And he loving those Perfections, and himself because of them, infinitely; he cannot but will that they should be propagated; and that every thing which he makes, should, according to its Capacity, partake of them. God's Will is the Spring, as of his creating the World, so of all his other after-

after-Works, they are all but the exerting of this teeming overflowing Goodneſs: He cannot but will and deſire that Man ſhould be as he is; that we ſhould be holy, and merciful, and righteous, and faithful, and wiſe in our Meaſure and Degree, as he himſelf is infinitely.

So then we have a moſt certain way to diſcover what the Will of God is, and muſt be, by a Conſideration of the Divine Nature, and thoſe Perfections which are eſſential to the Deity. And Man is not to ſeek in this matter: this is ſo obvious, and eaſy, and common a piece of Knowledg, that no Man's Mind is quite deſtitute of it. All Men agree in their Notion of God, and it can't be otherwiſe: For either they have the Knowledg impreſſed on their Minds, when firſt they came into Being; or elſe they are led into it by this plain and facil reaſoning, *viz.* Whatſoever Good there is in the World, is in God, who is the Original, eminently and perfectly. From hence we may conclude, that ſince all, who believe God to be, think him to be wiſe and good, holy, and juſt, and true; therefore nothing that's fooliſh or evil, impure or unrighteous, nor no Falſhood can be required by him. And on the other hand, all Goodneſs, Wiſdom, Sanctity, Juſtice, Fidelity, *&c.* is the Law of Heaven.

II. By a Conſideration of God's Works we come to a diſcovery of his Will. As Man's Mind is diſcerned by what he does,

so is God's: When God has made Beings with such Inclinations, and Faculties, and Capacities; if we suppose him (which we can't doubt he is) wise and good, we shall certainly know a great deal of his Will.

Let us take a view of God's Works in general, and consider those Beings which partake of Life, especially our selves, and we may observe such things as these, which will lead us to a Knowledg of the Will of our common Creator.

1. We may discern in them a sort of Self-love, whereby they have a Desire of, or Inclination to their own Preservation and Continuance in that Being and Life which they have.

2. An Aversation from all Pain, and a Love of Pleasure.

3. A Tendency to, and kind of aspiring after greater Perfection, and the utmost of which they are capable; To this we may refer the former.

4. A Disposition and Faculties to communicate and impart to others, none of them to be by and for themselves alone, but for others; that they are communicative and beneficial, and endeavour to propagate, and make others like themselves.

5. An exact Order. Among all Beings which God has made, one is plainly superiour to another: And of all these in this lower World, Man is supream: There are also higher than he; and all these things are subject to God's Will and Pleasure.

Now

Now from these Observations, how all living things are made with such Affections, and in such Condition, we cannot but conclude in general, that it is the Will of our great Creator, that every one should endeavour both his own and other Beings Preservation, and Pleasure, and Perfection; that we should be communicative, and live in Order; that the Inferiour be subject to the Superiour, and the worse serve the better.

Does not Nature teach these Lessons plainly to every one that diligently considers? May not any Man that looks into himself, and abroad, find that both Mankind, and all the kinds of Animals in the World, have these desires of their own Being and Perfection? that they do not stay in themselves, but go out to others in Communications and Services? may he not clearly see, that one kind is advanced above another, as well as of the same kind that some one is above the rest? and that Man is above all kinds?

And he that sees all this, how well is he instructed in the Principles of the *Kingdom of Heaven?* how may he learn the very Fundamental Laws, whereby God governs the World? which are such as these, *viz.*

That every Man should endeavour both his own and others Preservation and Perfection: That he keep not only himself, but others in that place and order, which the great and wise Creator has appointed them: That thus doing he carries on the same Design, which the Maker and Lord of all does

most evidently intend, and prosecute, as appears by the Inclinations and Appetites, which he has given all his Creatures, and by the Rank and Order in which he has set them to and with each other.

He that knows, that not only himself, but all living things have these Inclinations, and do naturally desire their own Pleasure and Perfection, and that they are all fitted for the Service of each other: He will conclude, that this is the Will of him that made us all, and is our common Lord; that we should follow these Inclinations in our selves, and comply with them in others, endeavouring to preserve every Being, and the lowest Life; and not only so, but to increase and perfect it as much as is consistent with the Service and Advancement of the higher and best Life, which is the Divine Life of the Mind, which in this State depends on the Life of the Animal in us.

If it be thought the Will of God, that we should preserve our selves, because of that Self-Love that is natural to us; for the same reason it must be thought his Will, that others preserve themselves: And if we oppose or hinder them that they cannot, we resist God's Will. If we do not what in us lies help them to do thus, we do not his Will universally.

He then that observes these things, will read the Will of the World's Maker in most legible Characters, such as have no Obscurity, but the most unlearned Man in the World may run and read.

If

If it be here excepted, That ſometimes theſe Inclinations claſh, they cannot all be gratified: And that Nature's Scholar has no Direction in this caſe; here are ſeveral things which God wills, but what ſhall be done, where there is a Competition?

I anſwer, That which every Man's Reaſon will direct him.

1. Be ſure there be a Contrariety betwixt an Inconſiſtency of theſe natural Inclinations with each other; that the ſame living Creature, Man himſelf, cannot be preſerved, and continue, as it is, if he become ſerviceable to the publick: If theſe can both be, let them: If they cannot,

2. Let it be in this, as in all other caſes it is, let the Superiour diſpoſe of the Inferiour, as may beſt promote the moſt publick, laſting, greateſt Good.

Thus we ſee a Grain of Corn, which in a cloſe Granary might be kept entire, for which State one would think it was made, being ſo whole and one in it ſelf. But yet it is by the skilful Husbandman thrown into the Ground, where it rots and dies (as the Apoſtle ſaith) in a little time, and ſo the Grain ſeems loſt; but yet afterwards it ſprouts and multiplies it ſelf into abundance, perhaps ſixty, or a hundred.

This may teach us not to be ſo careful of our own particular Beings, when by the giving them up we may do a far greater good.

Again; By Nature (as I have ſaid) we are inclined to ſeek after Pleaſure; but yet

by

by Nature also, *i. e.* by Brute Animals, that seem to regard only what is present, we are instructed to lay aside our Pleasure, when, by that, we may procure some better, or more lasting, or publick-Good, than that our Pleasure would be. So do the old Birds abstain from abundance of particular Gratifications, to hatch and feed their young; that is, they are more pleased with a publick, than a particular Good. And how common is it with us, to cut off a part, to save the whole?

But, if natural Reason, unassisted by Revelation, be not sufficient to direct us in this; yet by the help of that, we shall be fully furnished with the knowledge of what God would have us to do, where there is a competition of one natural desire with another.

More particularly: Whosoever considers the Humane Nature (which is the top of God's Workmanship in this lower World) besides these Affections, which we have hitherto taken notice of, common to all Animals, he will discover some things, which are more particularly found in Man, which will shew him what the Will of God is. Some of which are these following.

1. That Man is a compounded Being, made up of very many Parts and Faculties, and those of very different Natures, and for divers Uses. The two, to which all the other are reduceable, are his Body, and his Mind: That has very various Parts and Members; this contains two illustrious Faculties, the Understanding, and the Will.

Now

Now whoſoever takes notice of this, he cannot but conclude, if he ſuppoſe the Creator wiſe, that he did deſign, and does will, that all theſe Faculties and Parts ſhould be put to the Uſes for which they are fit: That they ſhould neither be unimploy'd, nor yet diverted from their proper Employment, and uſed otherwiſe than by their Natures they are fitted to be.

Thus then, by what God has wrought in us we infer, That it is his Will, that we ſhould be imploy'd, and in various Works; that we ſhould neither be idle, nor yet doing only one thing; that we ſhould be in the Exerciſe not only of ſome Faculty, but of all; and that we ſhould not be in any unnatural uſe of our ſelves, or of any part of us, but ever be doing thoſe Works, for which our Parts and Faculties were plainly deſigned by their Maker, and by their Frame are fitted.

2. The Soul and Body do in this State very much depend on each other, they ſo ſympathize, that if one be well or ill, the other partakes of its proſperous or adverſe Condition.

I do not ſay, that they are ſo totally dependent on each other, that the one cannot poſſibly ſubſiſt or act without the other, that they began and will end together. For, natural Reaſon gives us good probable Preſumptions, and the Religion of Chriſt aſſures us of the contrary. St. *Paul's*, and many other good Mens Experience proves to us, that the more the outward Man decays, the

the inward may grow more vivacious, and be daily renew'd and increase in Strength and Vigor.

This, by the assistance of the Divine Grace, and our co-operation, has often come to pass. But yet, every one is sensible of such a mutual Dependance of the Soul and Body, that the good or bad State of the one, ordinarily has Influence on the other. And this shews plainly, that he who made us so, intended and wills, that not one, but both of them should be regarded; that when we design the Welfare of one, we should not look on that, as divided from, but as united with the other: that we should not so gratify the Body, as if there were no Soul, nor should the Soul forget, that it is in the Body: that we should not look on our selves as mere brute Animals, nor as unbodied Spirits; that we should endeavour the Welfare both of the Mind and of the Animal together, of neither abstractedly and singly.

3. The Soul or Mind is confessed to be more excellent than the Body: And every one who thinks a Man has Pre-eminence over a Beast, will not deny but that it is, and ought to be superiour. For, tho the Spirit uses the Ministrations of the Body, yet in abundance of Instances it governs and disposes of it as it pleases. And it is manifest, that the Mind was not made to be subject to the Body, but the Body to it; the Soul of Man is supream. There is none who observes Man's Frame, but must conclude, that it is the Will of his Creator, that his Mind

should

ſhould rule, and his Body be in Subjection.

4. The Soul has a ſenſe or underſtanding of Good and Evil, and an Inclination or Love to all that appears good, and an Averſion from all that to itſeems evil. And according as any thing is apprehended by the Mind to be good, or evil: ſo it determines it ſelf, and all within its Power, to or from it, for or againſt it.

This is the *Cardo*, or Hinge, on which all our Frame turns, the firſt Spring of all our Motions, the *Primum Mobile* in Man; as all Men acknowledg by their Practice: For, when they would engage themſelves or others to any Undertaking, they ſhew its Goodneſs; or when they would take them off from it, they make it appear evil. Which Practice plainly ſuppoſes, that we all believe Man determines himſelf according as he apprehends a thing to be good or bad.

If this be true, then we cannot but conclude, that God intended, when he made Man after ſuch a manner, that his Will ſhould be conformable to, and guided by his Underſtanding; and in particular, that he ſhould will and do good; that all he did, ſhould be good: for elſe, why ſhould he frame him ſo, as that he can will nothing, but what appears to him under that colour? and why did he ſo form the Human Underſtanding, that ſome Things and Actions are by all thought Good and Evil?

But we ſhall be more fully aſſured of this, that God, who made us, vvills that vve ſhould love and do all Good, and hate and

ſhun

shun all Evil, if we make a nearer Inspection into the Souls of Men: for we may observe, not only an unalterable Inclination to do that which we think to be on one account or other Good; But,

5. Also a very earnest desire and care to know more perfectly what is, and all that is Good or Evil. No Man is willing to be ignorant, or mistaken; and he is no-where more careful of true Understanding, than in the matters of Good and Evil. That natural Desire of Perfection, which is common to all things, does exert it self in the Mind of Man in this Particular.

And if this be the condition of Man, that he does naturally and necessarily perceive some things that are Good and Evil; and by an easy and natural Ratiocination, will discover others; And if he go on to Perfection, which all desire and tend to, he will attain to a clear and certain knowledge of all that is Good: And if it be unnatural for him to will without, or against all understanding; Then we must conclude, that his Wise Lord wills that he should do all that is Good.

6. This will further appear, if we consider the Account to which Men call themselves for their Actions, wherein they approve and acquit themselves, if they have done well; but disallow and condemn all evil Actions. Nay, if they did ill, tho they intended well, they blame themselves for their Miscarriage: which supposes that they think they might, and should have prevented this, by being better informed in the matter

they

they undertook. But if they knew, or thought it was Evil, and yet chose to do it, they then rebuke themselves sharply, and their Consciences arraign them for a notorious Crime, and they are without Excuse to themselves.

All this shews, that he who made Man thus to review his Performances, to excuse and approve the Good, to censure and condemn the Evil; will'd that all he does should be good.

Love of Good seems to be the supream of all our Passions, that to which all the rest of our Affections lead, and in which all our Faculties terminate, from which all our other Passions issue, and by which the Mind governs the Body, and is governed it self.

And the greater and better the Good is, the more naturally it is loved. Therefore, as we have shewed, that, according to natural Order, this Good of the Mind ought to be preferr'd before the Good of the Body; so, that which is right, and fit, and becoming, before any other Good of the Mind, that is, the Moral before the Natural, for the one is in order to the other.

This Subordination and Subserviency, which is so conspicuous among our several Faculties, shews us that it is God's Will, that we should thus reduce our selves out of that Ataxy and Confusion, into which Sin has brought us, into that excellent Harmony and Serviceableness of one Faculty to another, and of all to the supream; that we

should

ſhould aſſert the Minds Superiority over the Body; and as to what is principal in the Mind, *viz.* the love of what is fit and becoming, that all the reſt ſhould be brought under ſubjection to it.

I might now proceed to abundance of Particulars, but that they would detain me too long on this Argument. It may be ſufficient to my purpoſe in general, that whoſoever conſiders the various Faculties of Man, and the Order and Reference they have to each other, the many Inclinations, and Appetites, and Capacities of our Natures, and the Operations which do neceſſarily flow from them; and will allow, that the Exerciſe and Perfection of, and keeping due order amongſt theſe natural Faculties, the following theſe Inclinations, and the Gratification of theſe Appetites, the filling up theſe Capacities, the doing theſe Actions, which neceſſarily follow Nature, are the Will of our Creator, (as they muſt be, unleſs he has made things in vain, that is, unleſs he knew not, or car'd not what he did) From thence he will moſt certainly collect abundance of the Divine Laws, and attain to a moſt clear Knowledg of what God requires of him.

If we further conſider the Reference Man has, 1. To God: 2. To other Men. 3. The Order, and Rank, and Relation he is in to Inferiour Animals, and other Beings; we ſhould preſently diſcover what kind of Behaviour becomes him on all theſe accounts, *i. e.* what is beſt, and therefore fitteſt for

for such a one in such Circumstances to do; and consequently, what is the Will of the wise and good Maker and Governour.

Thus we have discovered God's Will, that we should do good not only from a Consideration of the Divine Nature, to which Goodness is essential: But likewise from a view of the Nature which he has given us, which is so formed, that we can will nothing but what seems good. And if we follow our natural Inclinations, and seek after the greatest Perfection of Knowledg, that will seem so to us, which indeed is so.

III. A third way whereby the Will of God is notified to us, is the Consent of Mankind, at least of the generality, and of all the wise and good; when they shall agree that this ought, and that ought not to be done; we should look on that, about which they are so agreed, to be commanded or forbid us by God himself.

It is certain they think so, for else they could not look on Mankind under Obligation; there being none that has Authority to lay Commands on all Men, but God himself. But they do look on all Men, as obliged to certain things, as appears by their saying, they ought to do so or so: For this denotes an Obligation, and that a Superiority.

Now there is none but God who is superiour to all Men, to Kings as well as Subjects; to Societies as well as to single Per-

ſons: And yet of all theſe it is agreed, that they ought, or ought not to do ſeveral things.

Two things ſhould here be ſpoken to: 1. That this Conſent of the Community is and may be looked on, as a Declaration of the Divine Will. 2. An Enumeration of ſome of thoſe things, in which they thus agree.

1. It is not likely that Men of ſuch different Capacities, Tempers, Intereſts, Times and Places, ſhould agree in this, if it were not certainly true, and ſomewhat evident. There muſt be ſome one cauſe of this ſo univerſal Effect, and I know none to which it may ſo probably be imputed as this; that the Wiſdom which formed us, has inſpired us with this Knowledg, which was either impreſſed on us at firſt, or elſe our Minds did with an undiſcernable quickneſs infer it.

That the Wiſe and the Vertuous agree, that every Man ought, that is, in other Words, that it is the Will of God that every Man ſhould do this, or not do it; that is a ſufficient Declaration to the reſt of the World, that it is indeed the Will of God. For we may well ſuppoſe Men, ſo qualified, to have this Knowledg vouchſafed to them; and that they are the Perſons to whom God will, eſpecially, make known his Laws.

But where not only they, but all, or the far greateſt part of Mankind agree with them; this makes the Teſtimony yet ſtronger, and ſhews the Notoriety of the Thing. And that there is a concurrence of the generality, will appear by the Inſtances which I ſhall produce.

This

This Consent will, at least, amount to a high Probability, and those who make least of it, yet must think it to outweigh the sense of one, or some few: But where it is in concurrence with the other way, it ought to be looked on as a farther publication of the Divine Law, and a confirmation to us that this is it.

2. The Community of Men, tho they have never seen nor discoursed with each other, tho they live at the remotest distance, and understand not one anothers Language, nor ever maintained any Converse, yet agree in abundance of Particulars: Which I must not now enumerate. Take these few.

1. That we should all live soberly, that is, in such a government of our Appetites, and Passions, as to be in the best use of our Understandings, and of all our Faculties; that Men should not indulge their brutish life so much, at any time, as to lose the use of themselves; and to have the sense of what is good and evil, fit and unfit, extinguished, or the care of doing what becomes us laid aside: That what we do in compliance with our bodily Appetites, be rather a relief than a gratification, that it be not a thing, in which we take a full and final satisfaction, but that it be subservient to some greater and better work.

Tho all Men may not thus express themselves, yet these are their Thoughts; and tho many practise otherwise, yet it is without the allowance, and against the sense of their Minds. Or if any have brought them-

ſelves to ſuch a Reprobacy of Mind, as to call Good Evil, and Evil Good; they are by the reſt looked on as Monſters, and their Judgment is of no value; nay, in their ſober intervals they condemn themſelves. Thus then, not only the Wiſe and the Good, but the reſt of Mankind are of the Mind that Men ſhould live ſoberly.

2. That we ſhould be juſt and honeſt, true and faithful in our dealings and converſation one with other: And that we ſhould do to all Men, as we would have them do to us. Even thoſe Men that are unrighteous, will yet blame that in others, which they practiſe themſelves. And thoſe very Societies, which are Factions, bandying againſt the common Society of Men, are yet upheld by Truth and Juſtice among themſelves.

3. Beſides theſe, I might mention Gratitude to Benefactors, Honour to Parents, Veneration of the Deity, Pity of the Miſerable, and many more ſuch things: In which all Mankind agree, excepting a very few Monſters, that are uſing all the Arts they can deviſe to un-man and un-make themſelves.

Now, whence can ſo univerſal an Agreement ariſe, but from Nature it ſelf? And that which derives from Nature, muſt be thought to proceed from the Counſel of the Author of Nature, to whom all ſuch things are ſeen, and by whom they are allowed; and conſequently muſt be reckoned as his Will.

IV. God

IV. God has inſpired ſome holy Men with the knowledg of his Will, which by them has been delivered to others, and it has been made credible to all, that this was indeed the Will of God, and by him in a very extraordinary manner revealed to the inſpired Perſons. And this partly from the ſublimity and excellency of the matter contained in it; partly, from the fitneſs, the uſefulneſs, the neceſſary importance, the great goodneſs of it to Men; both which argue it to come from him, who only knows ſuch things, and is the great lover of Mankind. The Phraſe and Stile alſo are ſuch, as do not misbecome ſo wiſe and great an Author. And then the Miracles wrought in confirmation of it by ſome of the Pen-men, and by others who owned them to be divinely inſpired: Particularly the Prophecies and Predictions, which are punctually fulfilled, *&c.*

Such a revelation of the Divine Will we have in the Bible, that part eſpecially which is in the Goſpel, where we have a clear and full declaration, of all that which by Nature, and Reaſon, and the Senſe of Mankind, we were taught was the Will of God. That which the Wiſe and the Good came to underſtand in thoſe ways; the Unlearned and Inconſidering, and all to whom theſe Oracles come, are inſtructed and ſatisfied in by them.

Thus God has dealt with Men, in the ſame manner that our Earthly Lawgivers have done, that is, he has cauſed his Laws to be

Printed, and Publiſhed. And the Bible is the Divine Pandects and Code: 'Tis Heaven's Statute-Book: 'Tis both the Common, and Civil, and Canon-Law, whereby God governs his Subjects.

If any ſhould imagine that becauſe a great part of, or all the Bible was directed to particular Perſons, of ſuch Times and Places, that therefore they were intended for no more; Or, becauſe they were writ in an exotick and ſtrange Tongue, with which moſt of the World are unacquainted, therefore they muſt not be looked on as a Revelation of the Divine Will to all Men: I would deſire ſuch to conſider,

1. That in whatever Language they were writ, the ſame Objection would lie againſt them.

2. Here is work for Induſtry, and that which may engage Men in Study, and encourage Learning; and may occaſion Men of one Nation's acquainting themſelves with others, and with the Wiſdom and Cuſtoms of all Places and Times.

3. That what is contained in our Bible, was directed to ſome particular Perſons, this was no more than was fit to procure its Entertainment amongſt them. If it had been ſpoke to all, perhaps none might have minded it, at leaſt not ſo much, as they (probably) would to whom it was particularly addreſſed.

4. That however ſome few might be immediately concerned in it, and it might have eſpecial reſpect to the Men of one Age and Place,

Place, yet this hinders not, but that it might have a farther reference to all that were then, or should be afterwards, in all Nations to whom it should come.

And tho there might be, and were some of the Laws founded on particular Reasons, which afterwards might cease; yet this takes not off the Obligations of those Laws, which are founded on universal and immutable Reasons, such as belong to all Mankind in all Ages. Where the very same reason does not continue, yet there is often a Parity, which is sufficient to lay an Obligation on us: *Exempli Gratiâ*, Tho we may not look on our selves as obliged to offer Sacrifices on an Altar to God, by the Hands of a Priest, yet we may and should offer up to God of our Substance by the Hands of the Poor. And so the Law of Sacrifices may still direct, and in some sort bind us. And thus we may make use of the abrogated Laws, which were temporary, to direct our selves in the Knowledg of what the Will of God is to us, by considering Parity of Reason, which is the way we take in all Humane Laws.

This Exception being thus removed, we need not question but the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament contain a Revelation of God's Will to us, and all Men.

V. God teaches Men what his Will is, by secret Suggestions of his Spirit. 'Tis this, which often shews us *the way in which we should go*, which directs us, saying, *This is the way, walk in it.*

I believe there is no Man, but one time or other feels himself most powerfully instigated to do such or such an Action, which at that time he clearly apprehends to be good: And at other times, he is as forcibly withheld from what by a clear light, he sees to be evil. And this he cannot reasonably impute to any other cause besides the Spirit of God. He is not conscious of any Power within himself that can do thus, and there is no other visible Cause of this powerful Influence: So that it may well be ascribed to the *Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation.*

This brings to mind some of the Divine Precepts which we had forgot, or did not then think of: This discovers to us in some particular Instances, what God would have us do, which in other ways we could not have known.

Now, this being so distinguishable from the other ways as to the manner, and yet so consistent with, and agreeable to them in the matter of the Revelation; we may well conclude, that it's another way in which God discovers his Will unto Mankind.

Thus I have briefly considered the five ways in which God makes his Will known unto us: Concerning which ways I will further say;

1. That there is no Law of God, which is not, in one or more of them, publish'd unto us.

2. That some of them, and indeed many, are in all these ways to be known by us.

3. Those

3. Thoſe that are thus many ways declared, are hereby ſignified to be of great Importance to be known and done by us: Therefore was it that the Divine Providence took ſuch care, that they ſhould not be conceal'd from us.

4. Thoſe which are notified to us, in ſome one way only, *e. g.* the Scriptures, are not contradictory to, nor contradicted by any other that are revealed to us in the other ways. There is no Repugnancy, no Inconſiſtency betwixt them, but they all exactly harmonize and agree with each other. Whoſoever thinks otherwiſe, he takes that to be a Command of God, which is not.

There may be, and is ſomething more revealed in one way than in another; but there is nothing in one, that is repugnant to, that is inconſiſtent with, indeed, that is not agreeable to what is in another.

Therefore, if we at any time ſhould interpret the Scripture-Revelation in contradiction to the unqueſtionable Principles of the Reaſon and Mind of Man, we miſunderſtand it. Theſe are both God's Revelation of his Will to us, and he cannot contradict himſelf.

Whoſoever will do that which is every Man's neceſſary Duty, and greateſt Intereſt to do, that is, ſeek after a perfect underſtanding of the Will of God concerning Man; he may, by a diligent Exerciſe of himſelf in theſe ways, attain unto it. And whatever Pains he takes in it, I can aſſure him, he will find himſelf well appaid in the

Effect

Effect of his Labour: For that must be great Holiness of Life, and abundant Satisfaction and Quiet of Mind.

If I were to give a Compendium of that which all these ways appears to be the Will of God, (and more than a Compendium I must not offer at) it should be this, *viz.* the Perfection and good State of all Men.

Whosoever either considers the Goodness and Wisdom of God, or the Inclinations and Faculties which he has given to all Men, or the Sense of the wisest and best, nay, of all Men, who are in a restless Pursuit of somewhat they often mistake for their Happiness; or the holy Scriptures, or the secret Motions of the Divine Spirit: He will say, that all these do centre in, and aim at this; And consequently shew that this is certainly the Will of God.

And if we be once assured in our Minds, that the Goodness and Perfection, or best State of Man is the Divine Will; we have got a Clue that will direct us through all the Labyrinths of Particulars. And if we have but once form'd a true and distinct Notion of what our Perfection is, we shall then see clearly what are the Particulars of which it consists, what are the means that are in order to it, and what are the things that oppose and hinder it. And in effect, we shall be directed to a right understanding of all the Particular Precepts which God has any ways published to the World, and to a proper use of all those Helps which the Divine Wisdom has afforded us.

This

This is one way, but there are divers others: Every one may take that which beſt ſuits him.

There is no Man who conſiders, but will confeſs, that the Knowledg of the Will of God, is the moſt excellent and uſeful Knowledg we can have; and that it is a principal Ingredient in, and eſſential to all true Wiſdom; and whoſoever is deſtitute of it, he muſt live like a Fool: For he wants that ſure Direction of his whole Life, which he can only have from the underſtanding of the Divine Will: he wants that Principle, which is powerful enough to determine him.

He that is ignorant, or miſtaken in this matter, muſt in proportion want Wiſdom and Goodneſs.

And this I think ſufficient to raiſe the price of this Knowledg in every Man's eſteem, to aſſure him that without it he can neither be wiſe, nor live well.

If I ſhould be particular, I ſhould enumerate abundance of Miſchiefs, into which Ignorance or Miſtake of the Will of God, and his Law, betrays us.

I will only ſay this, That as Ignorance of it pulls up the Floodgates, takes away all Reſtraints, and gives free Paſſage to every vicious Inclination, and unreaſonable Appetite, ſetting them all looſe: So Error and Miſtake about it lays a kind of Obligation on, and makes it in a ſort neceſſary for us to do ill.

For,

For, if any wicked Practice, how monstrous and mischievous soever it be, come with a Commission from Heaven, and pretend the Authority of a Divine Law; we shall look on our selves as bound to obey: Nay, and the better we are disposed, *i.e.* the more inclined to be obedient to God, the more zealous and earnest we shall be to do this, which we, by a mistake, think to be his Will. And if it do, as it certainly will, oppose something that's in our Nature, and be never so contrary to our Inclinations; we shall break through all this opposition, and do Violence to our Nature, I mean to our Mind, which is the best and highest thing in us, to do it.

Nay, tho it should be never so prejudicial to the Society in which we live, confound the Order, and disturb the Peace of it; tho it should be attended with Tumult, and War, and Bloodshed: yet a false Conceit, that it is *the Will of God*, will make us break all Bonds, and nothing will hold us, but we shall, like the *Damoniac* among the Tombs, be hurting our selves, and disturbing others.

This is that, which under the Pretence of Religion, to which it is most contrary, has wrought so much Mischief in the World. I am sure the worst things that have ever been done by Men, have proceeded from their thinking that to be the Divine Will, which was not, which was most opposite to it.

It may be, some will infer from this kind of Discourse, that God has not made a clear

Disco-

Diſcovery of his Will to us, becauſe if he had, how ſhould Mankind be ſo void of the true Knowledg of it, how could they ſo groſly err about it?

To this I reply, That God has made it ſo plain what he would have us do, that no Men in the World can be wholly ignorant of it. And there is ſuch a Connexion betwixt the Divine Laws, they are ſo uniform, that the Knowledg of one will lead us to the underſtanding of more; and if we will obey thoſe we know, 'tis the ſure way to underſtand more, and by degrees all.

I ſay all this on Suppoſition, That Men will uſe their Underſtandings, and conſider what is before them: For, if they will not do this, they muſt continue in Ignorance and Error in all Caſes. But as it is no Argument the Sun does not ſhine, becauſe he that winks does not ſee it; no more is it that our Creator has not diſcovered his Mind to us, becauſe they who will not conſider, do not diſcern it, or are deceived about it.

But, that God has made a clear Diſcovery of his Mind to us is, I hope, out of doubt with us, by what has been ſaid concerning the ways in which he has done it.

For, whoſoever believes God to be what his own Mind tells him He is, what his Works declare He is, what the common Senſe of Mankind in all Ages report Him to be, *i. e.* Wiſe, and Good, Holy, and Juſt, and True; he cannot be ignorant what it is that God wills him to be: For God cannot but will,

will, that Man should according to his Capacity, be like unto Himself.

He that is not wholly ignorant of, or mistaken in himself, cannot but have some certain understanding of God's Law: For, if he know the Faculties with which he was made, the Order in which they are set to each other, the Inclinations and Appetites that are natural to him; he is assur'd that the Exercise and Perfection of these Faculties, the Preservation of this Order, the pursuit of these Inclinations, is the Will of his wise and good Creator.

He that understands what it is, that the wise and good, nay the generality of Men agree ought to be done; what in their constant, unprejudic'd, unbiass'd Sense, which is not hard to know: he does hereby discover the Will of the Lord of all.

And this Law is in the Bible writ in most legible Characters: All the weighty matters are there set down in so plain Words, that they are understood by all that understand the Languages: And by help of that Learning, which God has given Men, are translated into their own Native Language.

As many as have and can understand the Language of the Bible, cannot possibly be ignorant of, or misunderstand the Fundamental Laws of Heaven: And the rest are to be understood with relation to them.

And then over and above all these ways, God teaches Man by his Spirit.

In these several ways I have shewn how God discovers, and we may come to the Know-

Knowledg of his Will. But becauſe, notwithſtanding all, many continue ignorant, and not a few are miſtaken, thinking that not to be the Will of God which is, and that to be, which is not; and becauſe of the great Miſchiefs that come upon themſelves and others through theſe their Errors: Before I diſmiſs this Argument, I will lay down ſome Directions and Cautions, that ſo we may be preſerv'd from ſo baleful an Ignorance, and ſo fatal Errors.

1. In general, as I have intimated, we muſt uſe our Minds, diligently attend to, and carefully conſider, whatever it is that pretends to be the Will of God, and Law of Heaven: Think whether it be agreeable to the Wiſdom and Goodneſs, and the other acknowledged Perfections of God: Whether it be ſuitable to the Nature he has given you; whether it be matter that falls under common Obſervation, and not only the Wiſe and the Vertuous, but the Community of Mankind think themſelves and all obliged? *To the Law and the Teſtimony; ſearch the Scriptures*, and ſee if they ſay ſo: Hearken alſo to the Voice within you, whether the ſame be ecchoed to you from that Wind, which you know not *whence it comes, nor whither it goes.*

Nor ought you only to examine what pretends to be God's Law, but enquire after his Will in all theſe, and if there be any other ways wherein he manifeſts it to Mankind.

Let us uſe all Diligence that we may come to a perfect underſtanding of all Divine Precepts.

Precepts. For, if we be careleſs, liſtleſs, and will not conſider, we can never underſtand. If we could ſuppoſe God ſhould diſcover his Mind much more clearly than he has, yet he that will not regard, that will not attend, nor conſider, can't know.

Whoſoever therefore would attain to the Knowledg of God's Law, let me intreat him to beware of all things that tend to make him inconſiderate in general; or in particular, regardleſs of God's Will. Two things I would caution you againſt on this account.

1. Senſualities, which depreſs the Mind, and ſink us into Beaſts, inſomuch that by long uſe of our ſelves in this manner, we ſhall have no more regard to the Law than Brutes have, and ſhall live as they, without Senſe of God, and our Obligation to him.

2. All Opinions, and Diſcourſes, and all things that weaken, or any way undermine our Faith of God. Avoid every thing which we obſerve to extinguiſh our Senſe, or but to leſſen our Eſteem and Veneration of the Divine Majeſty. For whatever makes us regardleſs of God, does neceſſarily make us leſs careful to know his Will.

This leads me to ſome particular Cautions, all which do reſpect the five ways which I have diſcourſed of.

2. Take heed of falſe and fooliſh Thoughts of God: For ſuch as we think God to be, ſuch we ſhall think his Laws.

If we look upon God as a meer Arbitrary Humourſome Being, that does now this, now

now that, as the Humour takes him: that does nothing from a ſteady Principle of Reaſon, nothing that is accountable to and by Wiſdom and Goodneſs; we ſhall think his Laws to be the Determinations of a Will unguided by Underſtanding; a Will that does not determine it ſelf from unalterable Goodneſs. And this Thought will not only diſcredit his Laws, but make them unknowable by us: For who can find out the Determinations of an arbitrary unreaſonable Will, a Will ſeparate from Goodneſs? And ſuppoſe we could know them, yet it would be very hard to value and eſteem them.

Again; If we think God to be altogether like our ſelves, as unwiſe, impure, and unholy, unjuſt, evil, as careleſs of our Doings as we are; what dangerous Miſtakes ſhall we fall into concerning his Laws? For we ſhall then think, that what we will, he wills alſo: And therefore, if we have a Mind to deceive, to injure, and oppreſs others, or to drown our ſelves in Senſuality and Sottiſhneſs, that God approves of our Injuſtice and Beaſtiality. And indeed whatever our Heart, our Inclination carries us to, we ſhall conclude that God wills we ſhould do it: For we think him like our ſelves.

Again; If we think God not to be true, that he deals not ſincerely with us, that that is not his real Will, which he has declared is; that however he tells us he would have us do ſo, or ſo, yet he indeed wills that we ſhould do the contrary: This will dero-

gate from our esteem both of God, and of his Law; It will seem an Illusion and Mockery.

These few Instances, amongst many more which might be given, shew us how great Reason we have, in order to our knowing his Law, to endeavour after a true Knowledg of the essential immutable Perfections of the Divine Nature.

As the true Knowledge of God is an excellent means for our discovery of his Will, so a false Notion of him must necessarily lead Men into most dangerous Mistakes about it. And if we make God altogether unknowable by us (as we do, if we suppose him to act from a Will unguided by Wisdom and Goodness, separable from Justice and Sincerity) we likewise make his Will unknowable; for we deprive our selves of not only one, but I think, all the ways whereby we can know it. For then neither can we argue any thing from the Nature he has given us, nor from the Sense of other Men, no, nor from the Scripture it self: For, if we should not think that God means as he says, the Scripture can assure us of nothing: And what heed can in this case be given to those Motions which we ascribe to God's Spirit?

Thus one false Thought of God makes it impossible for us to be certain of what his Will is.

I might here give abundance of Examples, Modern and Ancient, what ill Effects false Conceits of the Divine Nature have had on the

the Minds of Men; and how by these they have been misled into most pernicous Errors concerning their Duty.

Was not this the Original Cause of all the Idolatries and Superstitions, Impurities, Rapines, of all the abominable unnatural Practices of the Heathen; the Pharisees among the Jews, and those nominal Christians which are a mixture of both? Did they not all spring from hence, that they had unworthy, untrue Imaginations of God? But this is obvious to every Observation.

To conclude this Particular: Let every Man that would know God's Will, take care what Thoughts he entertains of God: For as our Apprehensions of his Nature are true or false, such will be our Knowledg of his Will. Have recourse therefore to the lasting Impressions, which God has made of himself on your own Minds, to the sure Teachings you have of him, which are confirmed to you by the almost universal Agreement of Mankind: To those Manifestations which the incomprehensible One has made of himself to and by holy inspired Men, especially the Blessed Jesus and his Followers; and then you'll know him to be Wise, and Good, Holy, Just, and True; you'll be assured that these be the Perfections of his Nature; and consequently the Principles of his Will, from and according to which he always determines himself. And as any of his Creatures have Capacities, he cannot but will that they should be like him.

3. Take heed of false, inadequate, confused Thoughts of your selves. The right and true understanding of Human Nature, I have shew'd, contributes much to our understanding of the Will of our Creator; because by a Knowledg of our Faculties, of their Perfections simply, and of their Order among themselves, we discern what is our end for which we were made, and consequently what is to be done by us. But then,

1. We must beware, that we do not take that to be our Nature, which is most contrary to, which is the corruption of it. We must not call that a natural, which is an unnatural Appetite or Inclination, as every one is, that is immoderate, inordinate, that is destructive, or but hurtful to the whole Man, or to the Society, the Community of which he is a Member: That is not to be counted natural to Man which is corruptive of Men, this is a false Notion. We must not look on our selves as meerly passive.

2. We must not take up with inadequate Thoughts of our selves, so as to take a part for the whole; to think that we are nothing but Body, leads us into Sensuality, and a Study to please and serve the Flesh. Or on the other hand, to imagine that we are in this State nothing but Soul, will dispose us to neglect the Body; and so we shall be prone to turn either Brutish or Monkish.

3. It is not enough that we know our whole ſelves, but we muſt rid our Minds of confuſed Imaginations: For whilſt theſe remain, we do, if not prefer the Body before the Mind, yet equal them, and either ſet the lower Faculties above the higher, or in the ſame Rank: And this, as all Diſorders are, is very pernicious, and therefore not the Will of the Good One.

For the making all this clear, let us conſider a particular Inſtance. Suppoſe a Man perſwaded that it is the Will of his Maker, that he ſhould endeavour his own Preſervation and Perfection; So long as he eſteems the Depravation of his Nature, (as, a very vehement Deſire of bodily Pleaſure) to be natural, he will then ſtudy to procure ſuch Delights, he will earneſtly intend them, tho they be indeed the bane of his Pleaſure, and of his very Being.

This Man, ſo long as he has theſe imperfect Thoughts of himſelf, will not look on himſelf as obliged to mind that part, which he conſiders not as part of himſelf: He will not intend the preſervation and perfection of his Mind, whilſt he looks only on his Body as himſelf.

And if he has confuſed Thoughts of his Nature, not diſtinguiſhing betwixt his Machine and his Life, nor preferring one before the other; as he cannot poſſibly think himſelf bound to preſerve that Order betwixt theſe two, which he underſtands not: So whenever the Body is in danger to be deſtroyed, he will apprehend that the Soul

is in the same Hazard. And so can never willingly sacrifice his bodily Life, whilst he thinks it the same with the higher Life of the Mind. Nay, 'tis much if the Law of Self-Preservation does not prevail against any other. And how fit or necessary soever it be for him to die for his Religion, or Countrey, *&c.* yet he will not chuse it, he will not think himself obliged unto it.

4. I have directed you to seek for the Will and Law of God, in the sense of the Wise and Good, and the Agreement of the Community of Mankind with them; for 'tis not likely they should all be deceived, when they all agree that this or that ought, or ought not to be done.

But here I must caution you,

1. Not to divide these, but to take their Suffrages where they consent. I dare not lay so great stress on either singly, as I do on both jointly.

2. Be careful not to mistake those for Wise and Good, who are neither. Do not count Men wise, because they are fortunate and successful, which is a common Cheat. Neither call Men Good, 1. Who only make a shew, but are not what they seem; nor, 2. Those that have something which has the Vogue to be Good, but is not, as the Pharisees; nor, 3. Those who are but partially and very imperfectly Good, not so Good as to bear a Denomination, which is always taken *à parte potiori*; their Ill still weighs it down.

3. As

3. As I would not in this case lean on the Understanding of the Wise and Vertuous, when they think contrarily to the Community; so neither would I be concluded from the Opinions of one, or of some few, against the generality of the Righteous.

4. See that it be the unfeigned Sense of their most impartial uncorrupted Judgments, which is best known by proposing a matter generally, so as that they be not actually concerned in it; when no Appetite, nor Passion, nor Custom, does corrupt and bribe them: I mean by this, that we should observe Men that are, and when they are most free from those things, which too often obliterate and extinguish the Sense which their Souls have of what is fit, and what is not.

To this let me add, That we should do well to take notice of the first thoughts which Men have of these matters; which as they are freest and truest, so commonly they are the most inward, and the very sense of their Minds.

The Reasons of these Cautions will appear to any one that considers them. I need say no more but this, to shew their necessity, That Men have often thought that to be the Sense of Mankind, which was not; and have been frequently imposed on under an appearance of Goodness, so as to think that to be their Duty which they judged was, and were ready to take up every Burden which they laid on them, tho they required not only more than, but contrary to what God required.

5. In reference to that way of God's making known his Mind in an extraordinary manner to some, and by them to others: If I were to speak to those who are Strangers to our holy Scriptures, and might have some Enthusiastic Dreams, as the Alcoran, obtruded on them, with all the Vogue and Noise of the credulous Multitude.

I would advise them to look well, that the pretended Revelation of the Divine Law be in every respect worthy of that God, whose Authority it boasts:

1. That the things therein revealed be such as may beseem the great Author, in the Wisdom, and Goodness, and Holiness of them; that they bear these Characters of Divinity, and every one that sees them, may say, these are the Laws of the good Creator.

2. That the manner of the Publication may not be unbecoming him.

3. That they receive some super-human Attestation, that something be done, which may convince all considering Persons that they have a Divine Author.

By these things I should detect the Frauds and Forgeries of abundance of Men, who have pretended Inspiration, and to give us the Laws of Heaven. But to us who have examined the Scripture by these Marks, and are perswaded of their Divinity, I need not insist on these matters.

My Business is to prevent our mistaking the sence of these Divine Writings: That they

they are abuſed and miſerably wreſted by ſome that receive and rely upon them, cannot be doubted by us. St. *Peter* himſelf, one of the inſpired Writers, complains of ſome that *wreſted St.* Paul's *Epiſtles to their own deſtruction.* It concerns us therefore to ſee that we have the true ſence and meaning of theſe Books. As to the underſtanding the Will of God concerning us, let me offer a few Conſiderations.

1. That there is nothing in the Bible, to which God obliges us, that is repugnant to the Law of Nature, and the Reaſon of our Mind.

2. He has enjoin'd us nothing, but what is purſuant of the End for which he made us, that is, our Perfection.

3. The Scripture does not contradict it ſelf.

4. Where there are any ſeeming Repugnancies, that Sence is to be taken; 1. Which is moſt plain in it ſelf; 2. Moſt agreeable to the Deſign of the Whole; 3. To other plain Places; and, 4. Moſt conſiſtent with the eternal Reaſon of Man's Mind.

5. As you have Ability and Opportunity, acquaint your ſelves,

1. With the Scripture-Dialect and Phraſe, the knowledg of which would have kept an ancient Author of Credit, from interpreting that Command, *Thou ſhalt love the Lord with all thy Heart*, ſo as to infer that we ſhould love nothing elſe. It would alſo have hindred others from arguing, that God does more than permit Sin, becauſe he

is said *to do* those things which are done by Mens Sins, &c.

2. With the Customs to which the Scriptures refer, and with those Reasons on which any of the written Laws are founded: And observe the same Rules in understanding and interpreting these, which you use in any other humane Writings and Laws; As,

(1.) Where any of the Precepts are shortly, obscurely, or figuratively expres'd in one place, and in others more largely, properly, and plainly; interpret and understand the first by the latter.

And take heed of pressing and squeezing Metaphors: As here in this Chapter, *Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the Dead, and Christ shall give thee Light*; no Sence can be made of this, if we strain the Metaphor, *from the Dead.*

(2.) Do not make Precepts given to particular Persons, general and obligatory to all, where there is not the same nor a like Reason: But where there is that, reckon that what God by his holy Prophets has said to one, or to a few, he intended it to all.

6. Take heed of imputing those Suggestions to the Holy Spirit, which are only the Effects of an over-heated Brain, an extravagant Fancy, a deep Melancholy, or some such thing.

I am not of their number, who laugh at all the Illuminations of the *Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation*; I cannot restrain all that the Scripture says of these secret Teachings,

to

to the miraculous Effusions. I cannot but think that the Experience and Observation that every Man makes of himself, especially every vertuous Man, will assure him of the heavenly Irradiations.

But yet I doubt not that the Enemy of God and Goodness, who opposes all God's merciful Designs to Man, and endeavours to defeat them, is hard at work here. And as he has been observed to imitate the rest of the Divine Methods, so he is not wanting to resemble this also; and therefore does inject Thoughts, does cause unnatural Agitations in the Blood and Humours, does make use of a Melancholy Temper, a wild Imagination, a Time of Passion, &c.

Great Care is to be used, that we impute not our own wild Ravings, or the Suggestions of the wicked One, to the good and holy Spirit of God: For, so we shall be in danger to think that to be the Will of God, which is most contrary to it; as we know many of old, and too many of late have done. I will here very briefly lay down some Marks, whereby we may discern the one from the other.

1. Ordinarily and after the first beginning, the Holy Spirit works in us in a manner that is agreeable to our Natures and Tempers, suited to our Faculties, and to the Order in which they are set. Let us only here distinguish, as I said before, betwixt Nature, and the Depravation of it; And I doubt not but by Observation we may easily difference these two, for we shall discover something violent

violent and unnatural in all the Diabolical: And particularly I would observe, whether the rise of such thoughts was from the Mind it self, or from the Body, and some Motions in it.

2. The Holy Spirit does co-operate with us; his Teachings are commonly the Reward of earnest Prayer, and diligent Endeavours. I do not say but he also prevents our earliest Endeavours: but as our Saviour has taught us to ask, and seek, and knock, and has promised that the Spirit shall be given to us; so I take this Method to be a good sign that it is that Holy Spirit, when he comes in this way.

3. I consider the Opportunity, the Necessity of his teaching us, and look on it as no improbable Argument that it is he indeed, when there is an apparent need of his Operation: To help our Infirmities, to lead us when we are in the dark, to farther us when we are at work; and when we are seeking the knowledg of his Laws, then to enlighten us.

4. I will observe not only the general Temper, but the present Disposition of my Soul, when I suppose the Spirit teaches me. Holiness, Purity, Humility, Meekness, a calm, an obedient, a loving Spirit, are such Dispositions as invite the Divine Spirit; he loves to visit, to dwell in such Souls, they are Temples for him. If that be my general Frame, my present Disposition, I may reasonably presume it is the good Spirit that acts me. But if I be impure and proud, &c.

I have reaſon to fear the contrary.

5. Above all, conſider the thing it ſelf which is ſuggeſted: If that be conſiſtent with what we are by Scripture and other ways taught to be the Divine Will; if it be purſuant of the Deſigns of Goodneſs; if in order to our Perfection, and the good State of God's other Creatures: In ſhort, Is it good? does it become us? will it be beneficial to us and them? If not, aſſuredly it is not of God, of whom comes all, and only that which is good; who wills all that is, and nothing but what is good.

To conclude; Endeavour therefore after a true, clear, and full knowledg of what is good for you to do; and then have you got the moſt certain undoubted Mark of what is the Will and Law of Heaven concerning you. If you once know this, you will not be unwiſe, but *underſtanding what the Will of the Lord is.*

THE

THE ADVANTAGES OF CHRISTIANITY.

EPHES. 3. 6.

That the Gentiles should be Fellow-Heirs, and of the same Body, and Partakers of his Promise in Christ by the Gospel.

IN 1 *Tim.* 3. 16. the Apostle reckons these as two parts of the *Great Mystery of Godliness*, that the *Gospel* should be *preached unto the Gentiles*, and *believed on in the World*. And in the Verse before my Text, he calls it, *The Mystery which in other*

other Ages was not made known to the Sons of Men, as it is now revealed unto his holy Apoſtles and Prophets by the Spirit. And in the 7th and 8th Verſes he ſeems to *glory*, that he was *made a Miniſter of this Diſpenſation*; and accounts it a very ſignal Favour of God, that he ſhould be employ'd in *preaching the unſearchable Riches of Chriſt to the Gentiles*; that is, his unconceivable Grace, that *They* ſhould be brought into this State, that the Offer of ſo great Privileges ſhould be made to *Them*.

And he tells us, that now This is done, *the Angels* underſtand by it *the manifold Wiſdom of God*, which hath appeared in all his various Diſpenſations and Providences to his *Church*. This, it ſeems, was a *Secret* to the Angels themſelves.

But what is this of which ſo great things are ſpoken? This that is called a *Myſtery*, that deſerves ſo great a Name? For it intimates to us,

1. That it is a thing of great importance and moment, a matter of great conſequence; as well as,

2. That it is ſecret and concealed. And indeed if it were not a matter of moment, the Obſcurity and Secrecy of it would not make it of more account with wiſe Men, whatever it may do with the Ignorant. This was an Art the Heathens uſed, to beget in the Worſhippers of their Gods a Veneration of their Religion, by concealing ſome parts of it, and turning them into Myſtery.

They

They in this imitated some Painters, who draw a Curtain which hath nothing behind it. But far be it from us to imagine any such Artifice used by the Author and Publishers of the true Religion: No, their business hath been to reveal, not hide; not to obscure and vail, but to declare and uncover Truths. They have manifested them to us as much as the Matters themselves, and our Capacities would bear: and when they have done all, such is the greatness of some things in Religion, and such is the littleness of our Understanding, that there will yet and alway remain something that is beyond our reach, too big for us to comprehend, too glorious for our Minds to behold.

There are Mysteries to the highest Angels of Heaven, much more to us Mortals. Their knowledg is gradual, (*That now*, saith the Apostle in the tenth verse of this Chapter, *unto the Principalities and Powers in heavenly Places, might be known by the Church the manifold Wisdom of God*); and so may ours well be thought: It increases according to the further discoveries God makes to us; so that that is known in a following Age, which was not in the former. Thus it was in this particular before us, *That the Gentiles should be Fellow-heirs, and of the same Body, and Partakers of his Promise in Christ by the Gospel.*

For the full understanding of which Words, and the Mystery they import, we will consider,

I. In what condition the Gentiles were before they were called to be Christians.

II. Their excellent State after they became Christians.

And from both these will appear how great things are done for the Gentiles; and how much the Christian Dispensation excells not only the Gentile, but the Jewish also. This is expreſt in the Text by such Words, that they are *Fellow-heirs*, &c.

III. We will consider by what means this is to be done, which is here also declared to be the *Gospel*.

IV. And then we will conclude with some Inferences.

I. As to the Condition of the Gentiles before Christianity.

1. If we take an account of this Matter from the Jews, I know not whether we should look on the Gentiles to be Men or not; for they will scarce afford the Nations (as they call'd them by way of contempt, as we say the People) any better Names than Dogs. But we will not rely upon them, who were so highly conceited of themselves, and their own Privileges, and who treated all other Men with so much

disdain and scorn, as the Jews are known to have done. Nor,

2. Will we take our account from some Christians of a *Jewish Spirit*, who confine the Divine Love to some *Places* and *Times*, and will not allow that God has had any regard at all for Men, that have not been baptized in these latter, or circumcised in the former Ages: If they were not of such a Denomination, within such an Inclosure, they exclude them from the Favour of God, and look on them as wholly rejected, as those for whom God has no regard at all. They will not allow them to be in any possibility of escaping the Torments of Hell, and the Miseries of the future State. That is, because God thought not fit to confer on them all the Privileges which he vouchsafed to some, they conclude he had no kindness for them,

because he bestowed on the *Israelites* greater Helps to Vertue, than he did to the rest of the World, (which he did, partly, for the sakes of those excellently good Men from whom they sprang; and partly, because they were so very dull and hard-hearted, as *Moses* every-where tells them, therefore in compassion to their Infirmities he vouchsafed them these Helps) therefore he loved the *Israelites*, and had no affection for any other.

Or because we Christians are blest'd with the Gospel-Revelation, which is not made to others, that therefore God loves us only, and either hates or slights all the World be-

ſides. All which are great Miſtakes, and falſe Concluſions, which neither agree with the natural Notions which we all have of God, nor with the Revelations he has made of himſelf.

For how can we conceive, that that God, who is *Love* it ſelf, and the tender and compaſſionate *Father of Spirits*, and who hath inculcated this in the Bible, that he *loves the World*, and *deſires not the Death of a Sinner*; that he ſhould lay aſide all thoughts of the far greateſt part of Mankind, and wholly abandon their Intereſts; that he ſhould have no care of their Concerns, no regard whether they be happy or miſerable for ever?

No, no; theſe are unworthy, diſhonourable, unnatural, unreaſonable, unſcriptural Repreſentations of God. Men of theſe conceits make our Condition worſe than the Jews themſelves: for the Jews (as I remember) thought the Gentiles would not live after death; but theſe Men conclude them under everlaſting Wo. And as much as it is better not to be, than to be miſerable; ſo much better do the Jews think of the Gentiles, than ſuch miſtaken Chriſtians.

We will diſmiſs both theſe, and take our Information from Scripture. We will neither rely on the proud and ſcornful Jews, nor yet on ſuch narrow-ſpirited Chriſtians, as I have mentioned, but ſee what repreſentation the Goſpel makes of the Gentiles.

See in the ſecond Chapter of this Epiſtle, where the Apoſtle deſcribes to us the State of

of these *Ephesians*, before they became Christians; and we have no reason to think them to have been worse than others.

Verse 1. *They were dead in Trespasses and Sins*: So immerst in them, that there was very little hope they should ever get out of them. They *walk'd in them*; it was their practice, their course and way of life. *According to the fashion* or course (τὸν αἰῶνα) *of this World*, after the guise and manner of Men, as to the far greatest part. *According to the Prince of the Power of the Air, the Spirit that now works in the Children of Disobedience*; i. e. They liv'd in obedience to, and were under the Dominion of the Devil, to whom they are still in subjection, who will not obey the Divine Laws. *Doing the Will of the Flesh, and of the Mind*; that is, indulging themselves in Sensuality, and also being Slaves to Pride and Revenge, and such which I take here to be the Will or Desires of the Mind; or Discourses διανοιῶν, as the former are θελήματα τῆς σαρκὸς. *And were by nature the Children of Wrath, even as others*: And were truly, really, as φύσει is used, *Gal.* 4. 8. or fully and perfectly, as the Syriack, and St. *Hierom*; or by *Nature*, *i. e.* made by Custom, such as deserv'd and became obnoxious to Punishment; or by Birth, born Idolaters.

And as if he had not fully enough described their Misery before they were converted to Christianity, in the 11*th* Verse he calls on them to remember, that they who *were Gentiles in the Flesh were called the Uncircum-*

circumcision, that is, were destitute of that Federal Rite, whereby the *Israelites* entred into Covenant with God: *Were at that time without Christ*; that is, had not the Promises of Christ, at least not so plainly as the Jews; or knew not, and so had no expectation of a Messiah.

Alienated from the Commonwealth of Israel; Were not Members of that Commonwealth, which was by God's own appointment, and wherein he did preside in a special manner; for he was their King, and bestowed many special Favours on them that were his Subjects.

And Strangers from the Covenant of Promise; that is, those which were made with *Abraham*, and *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, and *Moses*, which had great and good Promises annexed to them.

Having no Hope; that is, no sure well-grounded Hope of *Pardon*, and *Resurrection*, and *Eternal Life*. The Philosophers themselves were very uncertain and doubtful in these matters.

And without God in the World; i. e. without the true and certain Knowledg of, and Love to God, and Worship of him. And also set at the greatest distance from the Influences of the Divine Goodness, as all wicked Persons, and those that are led *Captives by the Devil at his will*, are. A most dismal Condition, to be without God in the World.

See

/ See a farther Description of this sad State, Ephes. 4. 17. *As other Gentiles walk in the Vanity of their Minds*, which is expresst most signally in the worshipping of Idols, as that Phrase is used in *Rom.* 1. *They became vain in their Imaginations.*

Having their Understandings darkned; their Minds being ignorant and mistaken, their Discourses obscure and confused, perplext and doubtful.

Being alienated from the Life of God: Mere Strangers to that Divine Life which God lives, and requires them to live.

Through the Ignorance that is in them; *because of the hardness of their Heart.* Here he assigns the Cause of all the other Mischiefs, which are also a part of them, that is *Ignorance* proceeding from ill *Custom*, or that *Unwillingness*, which was the Effect of ill Custom; / for that is signified by πώρωσις.

/ I need not give any further account from the Scriptures of the Condition of the Gentiles before Christianity. The Sum of what we have found concerning it, is, that they by long ill use of themselves, had as it were so seared their Hearts, and made them so senseless, that they were ignorant and *vain in their Imaginations*, and obscure, and uncertain, and frequently mistaken in their Reasonings in general; and more particularly, they were without the Knowledg of the true God, Worshippers of Idols, and of vicious and wicked Practices, to which they were engaged by the Examples of most Men. And that they were under the Power of the De-

vil, and liable to that Puniſhment, which the Divine Juſtice would inflict on them. Very great was the Miſery they lay under at preſent; and they were ſtill liable to, and in danger of more and greater afterwards, and very little were the Probabilities of eſcaping from them.

They were as miſerable as Ignorance and Folly, as Wickedneſs and Vice, as Idolatry and Atheiſm, as the Malice and the Power of the Devil could make them; and then their Miſery muſt be very great. They were Men of vicious Lives, and when this is ſaid, enough is ſaid to ſhew their Miſery; for they that are without Vertue, want the greateſt Good of which Humane Nature is capable: and they that are wicked, are under the worſt Evil that can befal a Man in this State; and they are in great danger of all that Miſery to which Man is liable; they are obnoxious to theſe terrible Puniſhments, which the Divine Vengeance will certainly inflict on all wicked Doers: the very Apprehenſion of which (tho uncertain) did ſo aſtoniſh and amaze them, that it was alone a great Puniſhment, as the Poet excellently deſcribes it.

Quos diri conſcia facti
Mens habet attonitos, & ſurdo verbere cædit,
Occultum quatiente Animo tortore flagellum.
Pœna autem vehemens & multo ſævior illis,
Quos aut ædituus, &c.
Nocte dieq; ſuum geſtare in pectore Teſtem.

If

If the Presensions of that Misery were so tormenting, what will the Misery it self be? For those are not the Effects of a deluded Imagination, which many times make things greater than we find them, but they are the very Results of our Natures, the Discoveries which natural Sagacity makes; and Nature doth not deceive us.

This was the Condition of the Heathen World, and no Possibility of escaping, but by living well: which how hard was it for them to do, who must struggle with so many Difficulties, vanquish so mighty Oppositions, before they could forsake their evil Ways, and learn to do well!

It is true, it was not impossible; for God has implanted in Man a Power of *Consideration*, which is inseparable from his Nature, and to which he has ingaged and inclined him by a *love of Truth*, and *desire of Good*; which are also inseparable from the Nature of Man.

Now in whatsoever Condition any Man on Earth is, if he come to consider impartially and universally, he will (through the Grace of God, which is never wanting to him that diligently uses God's means) in time be recovered out of the worst State. But alas! how hard is it for him to consider, who has been long accustomed to Inconsideration? How easily is he diverted from beginning this Work? How frequently interrupted in it? How apt is he to give it over?

Nay,

Nay, and tho Men did with ſome Diligence conſider themſelves and the World; yet how eaſily might they ſlip into Error, and miſtake Good and Evil in divers Inſtances: And ſo notwithſtanding that it was not utterly impoſſible for them, through God's Grace aſſiſting, to get out of that woful Condition, in which the Gentiles were; yet it was extreamly difficult: and tho they might get out of Danger, yet they could not be quite out of Fear; for they had no Revelation that God would accept of their Repentance, they had no aſſurance of a future Life; and therefore they muſt *through fear of Death, be all their Life-time ſubject to Bondage.*

So then we have no Reaſon to queſtion that Account of their Condition, which the Scripture hath given; as that the whole World of Gentiles did *lie in Wickedneſs*; 1 John 5.19. Κεῖται ἐν τῷ πονηρῷ, lay proſtrate before the wicked One: or was prone to, and ſet upon Miſchief or Wickedneſs.

For a further Confirmation of this, I might appeal to their own Hiſtories, which give an abundant Teſtimony to this ſad Truth. Thoſe that have been converſant in their Writings, cannot but call to Mind two things eſpecially, which are but too convincing a Proof, that it was ſo with them as the Scripture hath ſaid. That is,

1. The Folly and Wickedneſs of the Gentile Religion, and the abominable Evils which were committed by them in the Worſhip of their Gods.

2. The

2. The absurd Mistakes and enormous Practices of many of their Philosophers, who were the wisest and most considering Men among them.

It is needless to give Instances of either: and these are a great Confirmation of our Belief of what the Scripture hath said. For if their Religion, their very Worship be wicked, what can we expect of their other Works, vvhich must either be influenced by their Religion or not; if they be, they must be wicked, as that vvas: Or, if they be not, yet then they did not live good Lives, because they vvere not religious.

Again; If the Philosophers so grosly miscarried, as too many did, what shall we think of the ignorant and unconsidering Multitude: *Rom.* 1. 20, 21. *When they knew God, they glorified him not as God, &c.*

I need not now stand to shew the Advantages which the Jews had over the Gentiles, expresst in these following places, *Rom.* 9. 4, 5. *Who are Israelites, to whom pertain the Adoption, and the Glory, and the Covenants, and the giving of the Law, and the Service of God, and the Promises, &c.* Rom. 2. 17, 18, 19, 20. and *Rom.* 3. 1, 2. But for our more distinct understanding of the Condition of the Gentiles before they became Christians, we may consider it in these Particulars.

First; We will take a view of them *singly and in themselves:* and here both their Understanding and their Vertue, their Knowledg and Practice will be considered.

Secondly;

Secondly; We'll alſo ſhew how they ſtood in reference to God. And,

Thirdly; How in reference to the Devil. From all which will appear, in what Condition they were, both as to this preſent, and as to the future Life.

Firſt; With reference to *themſelves*, their *Knowledg* was upon many accounts ſhort and defective. For,

1. It was not ſo large and extenſive in reſpect of its Object: They were ignorant in very many Particulars, both of God and Themſelves: They underſtood not the particular Providence, or the determinate Counſel of God concerning the future State of Men: They knew not by what means themſelves, and all Men became ſo very bad and miſerable, nor the Terms on which God would deal with them, nor the Way and Method in which they ſhould be recovered. Or,

2. Where their Underſtanding did reach any of theſe things, their Knowledg was very obſcure and inevident, and alſo very wavering and uncertain: They had but very imperfect Glimmerings and Dawnings of Knowledg: They rather conjectur'd and gueſt, than knew theſe things.

3. They had alſo many groſs Miſtakes, and abſurd Opinions, both concerning God, as to his Nature and Works, as well as concerning the Number of Gods.

4. From all which will follow, that their Knowledg was not greatly uſeful to them in that, (1.) It

(1.) It did not reach to many uſeful things: It fell ſhort of ſome that were almoſt neceſſary to be known, in order to Mens living well and vertuouſly: at leaſt they wanted ſome Knowledg which is abſolutely neceſſary to the greateſt Perfection of Vertue.

(2.) Where it did extend to ſeveral things, yet for want of greater Clearneſs and Certainty, it could not be ſo uſeful to the Guidance of their Practice, as otherwiſe it might. And,

(3.) Their Errors and falſe Opinions muſt needs lead them into the ways of Vice and Wickedneſs, at leaſt of Folly and Vanity.

2. As their defect of *Knowledg* muſt make them leſs *wiſe* and *vertuous*: So their *Errors* and *Miſtakes*, would alſo betray them to *fooliſh* and *wicked* Actions; That I am next to conſider, their want of *Vertue*, their abounding in Viciouſneſs.

We may take the Apoſtles Words in *Tit.* 3. 3. in which he gives an account of himſelf and others, before they became Chriſtians: *Fooliſh, diſobedient,* (to Governours I ſuppoſe) *deceived, ſerving divers Luſts and Pleaſures, hateful and hating one another, living in Malice and Envy.*

We ſee another Catalogue of Vices which were too too rife amongſt the unconverted Gentiles, in *Rom.* 1.29,30,31,32. *Being filled with all Unrighteouſneſs, Fornication, Wickedneſs, Covetouſneſs, Maliciouſneſs, full of Envy, Murder, Debate, Deceit, Malignity, Whiſperers,* &c.

For

For a Confirmation of this, that these were the Practices of the Heathens before Christianity, he may be assured of it from their own Writers; and not only the Satyrists, but the Historians will attest it, as any may be satisfied, who consult either the Greek or Roman Writers, where we find frequent Relations of gross Idolatry, of senseless Superstition, of most salvage Inhumanity, of most filthy and unnatural Bestiality.

These and such like were the enormous Crimes of the Pagan World, before the Light of the glorious Gospel scattered these Works of Darkness, and made them fly before it, as the Shadows of the Night do before the Rising Sun.

This may suffice concerning the *Ignorance* and *Wickedness* of the *Gentiles*, and what manner of Persons they were, considered in *themselves*.

Secondly; Let us next consider how they stood in reference to *God*: And we must conclude that they were at Enmity with him; by which we must not understand that God had no Mercy, no Good-will for them, (for this is to contradict the Scripture, and every Mans Sense, who retains his natural Notions of God) but that God could take no Delight nor *Pleasure* in them, that they acted in Contrariety and Opposition to him, and by this means had estranged and set themselves at the farthest distance from the Emanations of Divine Goodness, and out of the

the way of his Mercy, and had put themſelves in almoſt an Incapacity of receiving Good from him. Nay, as long as they continued in the ſame State, they were in an utter Incapacity of thoſe Influences from God, whereby he makes Men happy.

I muſt add, that they had made themſelves obnoxious to Juſtice, and liable to the Puniſhments, which the Holy God had denounced againſt the Tranſgreſſors of his Laws. They had offended God, and knew of no Mediator, no Interceſſor, no Sacrifice to make Expiation, no Prieſt to offer it. This was the Condition of the Gentiles with reſpect to *God*.

Thirdly; If we alſo add to this, that they were under the Power of the *Devil*; as all that are Rebels againſt God, and have renounced their Allegiance to Heaven, muſt be: For, they that are not Subject to God, have Satan for their Governour; for he is the Head of the Apoſtacy from God and Goodneſs.

If we add this to the former Conſiderations, we may ſeem to have compleated the Miſery of the Gentile State: For, what greater Miſery than to be the Slaves of this Enemy of God and all Goodneſs? This grand Oppoſer of Man's Happineſs? To be *led Captive by him at his Will?* To be dragg'd at the Chariot-Wheels of this inſulting Conqueror? What can be worſe than firſt to execute his malicious Will, and then be puniſhed for ſo doing? To be moſt cruelly tormen-

tormented for obeying thoſe Laws of Sin and Death which he gave them?

And this was the State of the Pagan World; they worſhipp'd Devils, they received Oracles from them, they obey'd them, they were ſubject to their Dominion. This is alſo plainly atteſted by their own Writers. And when the Scripture ſpeaks of their Converſion to Chriſtianity, it expreſſeth it thus; that they were *turned from Darkneſs to Light, and from the Power of Satan unto God:* Acts 26. 18.

I have ſaid enough, one would think, to ſet forth the miſerable State of us Gentiles before our Converſion: but yet there is one Conſideration more, which exceedingly aggravates their Wo, and that is, that they are liable to be condemned to the greater and more laſting Miſeries of the future State, thoſe Torments which admit of no Eaſe, and will have no end, which they cannot eſcape except they be *recovered out of this Snare of the Devil*, and become the Servants of God. That is, unleſs they *ceaſe to do evil, and learn to do well:* which how hard it was for them to do, we may conclude from the Difficulty that we (who have the many greater Helps, which the Goſpel-Diſpenſation affords us) find in it.

And beſides, how full of Anxiety and diſquieting Thoughts muſt their Sin and Ignorance, and their Preſenſions and Boadings of Evil to come, of a deſerved Puniſhment for their Faults, fill them with? Nay, tho they ſhould repent and amend, how uncertain

muſt

must they be of the Pardon and Favour of God? And therefore how must they through *Fear of Death, be all their Life-time subject to Bondage?*

Thus I have very curiously given an account of the first Particular, *viz.* The Condition of the Gentiles before Christianity.

II. I now proceed to shew some of the Advantages which the Gentiles have by becoming Christians: And this will appear both in respect of *Themselves*, and in respect of *Others*.

First; If we consider them in themselves singly, their Advantage appears in this, that their Minds are greatly enlightned, their Hearts are throughly purified, their Lives are reformed and amended.

1. Their Minds are enlightned: Their Knowledg is both larger, and clearer, and surer than it was; and consequently far more efficacious and powerful.

They know the Nature and Condition of Man far better; they are now assured of a Spiritual and Immortal Soul which inhabits this Body, which is the far more excellent Part of Man. They have now assurance, that they and all Men shall live after Death, and that they shall be for ever happy or miserable, according as they have lived here. If they have lived a Holy and Vertuous Life, they shall be brought into a State of endless Blifs: If they have done Evil; if

they have not done Good, that they shall fall under unsufferable and perpetual Torments.

They now understand, that the Cause of all the Miseries and Imperfections of Mankind is their *Sin*: That all the Calamities in the World owe their Original to the Wickedness of Men.

They now understand the Dangerousness of their Condition, and they are fully convinced of their own Impotency and Insufficiency; which Acquaintance with themselves, what a Preparation it is to Vertue and Holiness, we shall see presently.

Again; They know now, that God is a Spirit of an Incorporeal Nature, and such as their own Souls are; and that He is but one: The *Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit* being all *one*. That it was *He*, that made the Heavens and the Earth by the Eternal *Word*; and that by his powerful Decree all things are continued, and that his *Providence* doth so particularly superintend all things, that not a Sparrow falls to the Ground without his Knowledg and Permission. And that this *God knows* all things; that he searches the Hearts, and sees the secret Works, and the inward Thoughts of all Men: and that he is infinitely *good and kind*: That he is immutably *Holy*, and *Just*, and *Pure*: That he will call Men to *Account for the Deeds they have done in this Body*, and will reward the Good with *Everlasting Life*, and will adjudg the Wicked to *Everlasting Woe*.

They

They also more perfectly understand their *Duty*, and the way of Life in which they should walk. They now know that *Spiritual Worship* is that which God principally looks at: and that this is not only to be confined to certain *Times*, and *Places*, and *Actions*; but that at all Times, and every where God may be worshipp'd, and that in the whole *Course* of our Lives, and in all our Actions, his glorious Perfections may be, and are to be acknowledged: And to him is to be ascribed his *Excellency* above all, by *Loving*, and *Fearing*, and *Believing*, and *Obeying* Him more than all.

They know they ought in all their Wants to make their *Supplications* to God; and that they should *praise* and be thankful to him, for all the Good they receive.

They know also, that they are to apply themselves to *God by Jesus Christ*; that it is by and through him, the Merits of his Life and Death, the Prevailing of his Intercession with the Father, that they are accepted.

They are likewise fully instructed, that they are to *purify themselves from all filthiness of Flesh and Spirit*; that they are to bring into *subjection the Body*, and to keep it under: that is, that all the inferior Appetites and Inclinations be kept in a due subordination to the Reason and *Law of their Minds*.

They are now told plainly, That they must not only be Just, and True, and Honest, and Fair in their Dealings with Men;

ſo as not to circumvent and cozen; not to deceive and diſappoint, but muſt ſtand to their Word, keep to their Promiſes, make good their Contracts; but that they muſt alſo be compaſſionate and merciful, courteous and kind, gentle and meek, loving and good to all Men; to Neighbours and Acquaintance, and alſo to Strangers and Foreigners; to Enemies as well as Friends: Nor only to the Good, (tho to them principally) but alſo to the Bad.

Thus are they inſtructed in their Duty; and they ſee not only what they are to do, but why they ſhould do it. They underſtand clearly the goodneſs, the fitneſs, the beneficialneſs, the neceſſity of ſuch a Life. They ſee how natural, how reaſonable it is; how juſt it is to live thus, if they reſpect God who requires it, who made and preſerves them, and from whom they receive all Good; who is their undoubted Lord, and perfectly Wiſe and Good, and who will be their Judg.

They know their dependence on Him, and therefore muſt conclude that they ought to be at His diſpoſe, and be directed and governed by Him. They ſee the manifold Advantages which accrue to them, as well as to others, by ſuch a practice. They feel a preſent Eaſe and Satisfaction, an inward Pleaſure and Delight, ſuch as they take when they do any natural Actions: and they are alſo ſenſible that they are more perfected, that all their Faculties receive new Acceſſions of Strength, and are more enabled

enabled for their several Functions and Offices.

Besides; they perceive, that other Men are the better for their being better; that not only their Families, but the more publick Societies of which they are Members, are beneficed by their holy and good Lives.

And since they feel so much good in them at present, they cannot but earnestly desire and hope for that Happiness which their Minds presage, and the Gospel assures them, remains for good Men in the future State.

Furthermore, the Gospel ascertains them of the manifest danger they run, who do not live thus; they are assured that they cannot *inherit the Kingdom of God*; that their Doom must be, to go away from the Presence of God into Everlasting Misery.

These are some of those things in which the *Gentiles* are instructed when they become Christians, of which they were in their Gentile State either wholly ignorant, or at least very uncertain.

2. And we may well suppose that where the *Mind* is thus enlightned, the *Heart* will be purified, and the *Life* amended: for Impurity and Wickedness, are Works of Darkness and Ignorance. And where the Light of a clear and certain Knowledg breaks into the Soul, it must needs dispel all those foggy Mists, and those Shadows of Darkness which had overspread and benighted it: Those Owls and Bats, and those Beasts of the Forrest, which went

abroad in the Night of Ignorance, will not shew their Heads, now the *Sun of Righteousness* hath display'd his Beams in the Soul.

So that now *the Flesh is crucified with its Affections and Lusts*. All those wicked Passions which rebell'd against Reason and Conscience, and rob'd the Soul of its Innocence and Quiet, are now subdued by Christ. The Mind does now no longer *serve divers Lusts and Pleasures*; nor is it at the Mercy of those Furies of Revenge, and Malice, and Envy. But in the room of these are come Mildness and Gentleness, Benignity and Mercy, and universal Good-Will.

The Gentle turned Christian, is not now addicted to Gluttony and Drunkenness, to Chambering, Wantonness, and such like revelling and riotous Courses: but he is temperate and chaste, and keeps those Appetites of bodily Pleasure within the Bounds which Nature and approved Custom, which Reason and Laws and Religion, have set.

He lives in the constant exercise of a pure and spiritual Religion, and expresses a regard to God in his whole Life, acknowledging the Divine Perfections, as well as God's Superiority over, and Right to him, by his loving and fearing Him above all, and his constant study to please Him, in obedience to his Laws, and imitation of his Works.

He keeps all his Faculties in that due and natural Order in which God placed them,

when Man came first out of his hands; that is, the Body is subject to the Soul, and the Will is under the conduct of the Understanding. He rids himself of all irregular Appetites, and disorderly Passions, and so walks not in those ways of Sensuality in which brutish Men are found.

And his Conversation to others is innocent and simple, full of Plain-dealing and Honesty, adorn'd with Mildness and Equity; nor hath he any other Designs, but those to which he is engaged by the most undissembled and fervent Love.

In respect of other Men, the Christian may be said to live a Life of *Love*; for this is that which directs, which ingages him to all he does to them. This is the predominant Affection, the most powerful and prevalent Principle of all his Actions.

But I shall not now engage in a particular Discourse of the Goodness of a Christian's Life: What hath been said, may be sufficient to shew that the Christian's Heart is purified, and his Life reformed; that he is not affected, nor does he *walk as other Gentiles*, who have not known Christ.

If any should think that I have set his Holiness too high, (tho I doubt not but many have exemplified all that I have described) yet suppose the more common sort of Christians, who have not yet attained to all this Perfection, only they are earnestly pursuing and reaching after it, even such do far transcend the unchristened Heathens. And those of this lowest Rank of Christians

have great Peace and Quiet of Mind, a thing to which the Ignorant and Superſtitious, the Vicious and Wicked amongſt the Heathens muſt be utter Strangers; For the *Wicked*, he is ſo full of guilty Fears, that he *flees when no Man purſues him*; and it is an eternal Truth, that *there is no Peace to the Wicked.*

If we'll allow ſome of them not to have been wicked, yet we muſt confeſs that their Knowledg was far ſhort of the Chriſtians; and all Ignorance and Uncertainty muſt be attended with Fear and Unquietneſs. But the Chriſtian's clear and certain Knowledg of God, and of himſelf, of the Undertaking and Performance of Chriſt, and of his own Duty, and the Encouragement he hath to that, together with his ſincere and honeſt Endeavour to do what is good, muſt lay a ſure Foundation of laſting Peace, and be a Fountain of Pleaſure ever ſpringing up in his Soul.

Thus I have briefly conſidered the converted Gentile in himſelf ſingly: but becauſe Man is weak and dependent, and not ſufficient for his own Happineſs, I will now go on to ſhew how it is with him,

Secondly, In reſpect of other Men: And of,

1. Thoſe that are no Chriſtians, as well as,
2. Of thoſe that are.

1. Thoſe

1. Thoſe that are no Chriſtians, if they have any remainder of Love to Goodneſs, will eſteem and reverence that admirable Vertue which they ſee the Chriſtian practiſe: For, his Life being an Exemplification of the Precepts of the Goſpel, muſt needs make every Beholder in love with it. The Chriſtian's univerſal Love, his Good-Will to all Men, muſt conſtrain all Men to love him; and whilſt he is intent on doing good to them, as by his Profeſſion he is obliged, it is not likely that they will do Evil to him.

I grant, that ſometime this may happen, that Men may *hurt us* whilſt we are *following that which is good*; but this comes to paſs, for the moſt part, through a perſuaſion that ſuch Men are meer Pretenders, and not what they ſeem. And I am ſure it is the likelieſt, and therefore the wiſeſt way we can take to prevent oppoſition and harm from other Men; for no Man will lightly ſet himſelf againſt him who is doing good.

But if any ſhould think, that this is the way that will lead him into all Sufferings from others; and that if he ceaſe from Evil, he certainly makes himſelf a Prey; that his Innocence is the white Mark at which the Wicked aim; and that they who are reſolved to be wicked themſelves, will be angry at every one that is more righteous than themſelves. Let us ſuppoſe that ſome Men are ſuch Devils as to hate Vertue, and that they are enraged againſt every one that is a Lover of Goodneſs; Yet even in this caſe,

Care

Care is taken by the great Governor of his Church, and of the World,

1. That no oppoſition ſhall prevail againſt the Chriſtian Society, but that they ſhall contiuue ſome-where or other in the World, in ſpite of the Malice of Earth and Hell. And,

2. That whatſoever any Man ſuffers in and for well-doing, he ſhall receive an abundant Recompence for it: He ſhall at preſent feel that inward ſatisfaction of Mind, which will make the worſt Condition not only tolerable, but eaſy; and perhaps his very Perſecutors will give a teſtimony to his Vertue, and will (at leaſt tacitely) approve that which they puniſh and perſecute. And after he hath ended this Life with Self-ſatisfaction, as well as Honour from all that knew him, and were Lovers of Goodneſs, he ſhall then enter into inconceivable Bliſs, and be filled with *Joy unſpeakable, and full of Glory.*

2. This is the Condition of Chriſtians in reſpect of them who are without. Let us now conſider them with reference to thoſe that are within, the Members of the ſame Body, united with them in the ſame Society; Men who are of the ſame Inſtitution, and under the ſame Obligations with themſelves.

Now as there is ſcarce any Society in which Men are, but they receive conſiderable Advantages by it; for they are by this ſecured from very many Outrages, to which, if they were alone, they muſt neceſſarily be expo-

exposed; and they, by the mutual Assistance one of another, have their Wants supplied much more conveniently than they could have been, if they had continued by themselves: Insomuch that it is scarce conceivable, that any Society should be so bad as Solitude. They are a wretched Company of Men indeed, from whom a Man will flee into a Wilderness, and rather chuse to be among the wild Beasts, than to associate with them.

But grant, that a Solitude, a Desert, may be more desirable than some Societies; yet this cannot be imagined of that which is the best Society of the whole World: And such is the Christian Church, to be a Member of which, and live in Communion with it, is one of the greatest Blessings that can be given to any Man, because of the inestimable Benefits he is entitled to, and receives by this.

For, by being one of this Corporation, he is both more obliged and engaged, as well as more assisted and helped to do well, and consequently to be happy, than he could be if he was alone, or of any other Society. This will be very evident, if we consider these following Particulars:

The Profession which every one makes when he becomes a Christian; the Terms on which, and the Rite with which all are first admitted to this holy Corporation; and also the Condition of our Continuance in it, by which

which we understand the Quality of the Members of this Body.

2. The large Bounds and vast Extent of this Society; the great Numbers of them that have been, and are of it; and the Length of its Duration.
3. The Excellency of the Order and Government which is established in this spiritual Polity.
4. The good Laws, that regulate our Affections and Carriage to each other, which are given to all the Members of this Holy Society.
5. The Holy Solemnities, and Sacred Rites, to which every Christian is admitted in the publick Assemblies.
6. The proper and wholesom Discipline, which is used towards Offenders.
7. The wise and good Counsels, the holy and vertuous Examples of the Members of this Society.

These and such like Particulars, if well consider'd, will make it evident, how much advantage it is likely to be to those who are received into this excellent Society: Let us briefly run over them.

First; Every Man by his entring into it, professeth he will observe the Counsels, obey the Precepts, and follow the Example of Jesus Christ; that is, he engages himself to the practice of all Holiness and Purity, of all Goodness and Vertue whatsoever. And whosoever does not thus, must contradict

and

and bely his Profession, and proclaim himself an Hypocrite, which Men are not willing to do.

The Conditions of Mens being received into the Church, are these that I have already mentioned, or which is the same in other words, to *repent and believe*, or *obey the Gospel*. These are the Terms upon which every one is admitted at first; and those upon which he continues, is his Perseverance, and not only so, but also his *bringing forth Fruits meet for Repentance: For every Branch that bears not Fruit, is cut off*, saith our Saviour.

Thus then by the very Terms on which I am received into, and continued in this Society, I am mightily engaged to an holy and excellent Life. If I do what I have taken upon me to do, I shall be a very good Man; and if I be only a Pretender, but make not good my Engagement, if I only pretend to be a Christian, but am none; I am an Hypocrite here, and my Portion shall be with Hypocrites hereafter.

And if other Men will make good their Profession, and perform the Conditions of Christianity, then will manifold Advantages accrue to me from this: For, they are obliged, both by the Commands and Example of our Saviour, to be not only just and honest, but merciful, and kind, and bountiful to all, but especially to their Fellow-Christians.

And lastly; To ratify this Engagement, and make it more solemn, and sensible, and strong,

ſtrong, that common, and eaſy, and ſignificant Ceremony of *Baptiſm*, or Waſhing, is uſed: which, as it ſignifies to us that inward Purity to which Chriſtianity obliges us, ſo it brings this to our remembrance; as all corporal and ſenſible things do put us in mind of thoſe more ſpiritual, with which they are joined.

I will not now inſiſt on thoſe ſecret Bleſſings, and unſeen Graces, which we may upon good grounds believe God vouchſafes to all that uſe his Ordinances.

The Sum of what I have ſaid under this Particular is, That it is a very great Advantage to be of the *Church of Chriſt*, becauſe of the Terms on which, and the Rite by which we are received into it, and becauſe of the Profeſſion we and all Men make at our firſt entrance.

All which lays a great obligation on us all to live good Lives; which if we do, we ſhall be in capacity of receiving, and they in a diſpoſition of doing great Good to us.

By this we underſtand the Nature and Quality of the Members of the Chriſtian Society, that they are holy, and vertuous, and good Men; for ſuch muſt they be, who are reſolved to obey the Commands, and imitate the Example of Chriſt.

I ſpeak of that which indeed is, not that which only ſeems to be, the Church of Chriſt, of real, not nominal Chriſtians. I proceed,

Secondly;

Secondly; To a Conſideration of the vaſt Extent and long Duration of this Holy Society. It is ſpread over the face of the whole Earth: for in all places *where* there are Men of this Character and Quality, Men of the truly Chriſtian Temper and Spirit, Men that obey the Law of Chriſt, and live as he did; there are the Members of Chriſt's Body: For Chriſt is not a Name, and a Word; nor is Chriſtianity a Profeſſion and a Shew only; nor is the Company of the Faithful, Men of an external Denomination: but *Chriſt is a ſpiritual Head*, and *Chriſtianity* is an *inward Principle of Life* and Power; and Chriſtians are not thoſe who have a Form of Knowledg and Godlineſs, but the Power.

They are *Chriſtians*, who are inwardly ſuch; who have not only waſh'd their Fleſh in the Sacred Font, but who have *puriſied their Hearts*, who have *cleanſed their Conſciences from dead Works, to ſerve the Living God.*

And where-ever in the World ſuch Men are, in what places, how remote ſoever, they are of the ſame Body of which Chriſt is Head; and in whatſoever diſtant times they lived, they were of the ſame Society: For, there were alway two great Corporations or Bodies of Men in the World, and never more: one who obeyed the Laws of God, of whom the *only begotten of the Father*, the Eternal *Word* is the *Head*; the other, who caſt the Laws of God behind them,

them, and follow their own Luſts, of theſe the Devil, the Prince of Apoſtate Angels, is the Governour.

So that the Men of this Chriſtian Temper and Life, in whatever Ages or Places of the World they have lived, or do, or ſhall live, they are of this Society or Church. Nay, it extends it ſelf further, to thoſe in Heaven alſo, *the Spirits of juſt Men made perfect:* They are indeed the Church Triumphant, but they are ſtill of the Church; ſo that of this there ſhall be no end. When we ſhall put off theſe corruptible Bodies, and leave this Earth, and go to Heaven; yet even then and there we ſhall continue in the ſame Society, and be Members of the Body of Chriſt.

From this Conſideration we may infer, What a grand Privilege it is to be of this *truly Catholick Church*, which hath been in all Ages of the World, and which will continue for ever; which is not only in all places of this Earth, but in Heaven alſo: For by our being of the ſame Body, we are engaged and diſpoſed to an univerſal Love to all holy and good Men; (as Men of the ſame Country or Town, are more inclined to love each other, rather than Strangers.

(And this is a great Advantage indeed, to have our Love directed aright, and increaſed. But beſides this, we communicate with the Saints of all Times and Places, and receive many Benefits upon the account of their Prayers, and their Holineſs.)

How

How many times hath the infinitely good God tranſmitted down his Bleſſings to many Generations, for the ſakes of his *Abrahams* and his *Davids*, and the whole World? but eſpecially Men of the ſame Society with them, have fared the better becauſe of them.

This alſo is conſiderable, That we cannot be ſeparated from this Body by any length of Time, or diſtance of Place; where-ever we live, or where-ever we are, if we be of the Chriſtian Spirit and Temper, and *live the Life of Chriſt*, we are of the *Chriſtian Church*. Nay, tho it ſhould happen that we be deprived of the outward *Ordinances*, (provided this be not through our own Fault, our Neglect, or Contempt of the Divine Inſtitutions) we are not in this Caſe deprived of the Inward and Spiritual Influences which we have by our Union with this *Myſtical Body*. For, the Prayers of the *Univerſal Church* bring Bleſſings upon us, and the Spirit of Chriſt, which enlivens and animates all his Members, quickens us, excites and aſſiſts our Endeavours; and that care which our great and good Lord hath of all his Diſciples, reacheth us, and we partake of his Protection, as well as others that are of his Kingdom.

Thirdly; There is ſuch an excellent *Order* eſtabliſhed in this Chriſtian Polity, that there is no claſhing nor interfering of oppoſite Intereſts; but, on the contrary,

each part doth assist other, and is assisted by it, and they all most friendly conspire together, in the best manner to promote the welfare of all and every one. There are no Confusions and Disorders, but every one hath his Work, his Business allotted him; and that is according to every Man's *Gifts* and Qualifications; and every Man is required to attend and do that Work which he is fitted for.

Now because *Order*, and consequently *Peace*, cannot be preserv'd without Government, Christ hath instituted an excellent *Government in his Church*, a Government that is both gentle, and yet sufficiently strict, for the attaining its Ends, which is the *Common Good*. And herein our Saviour hath shewn, that he hath a care of the Body, and therefore hath appointed Officers, *Deacons*, to see to the *necessities of the Saints*; Men, whose Business it should be to receive the charitable Gifts of some, and bestow them upon the Indigent. But he hath taken especial care of the Soul, and therefore hath appointed others *Presbyters*, whose Work this is, to teach and instruct, to exhort and perswade Men to live well, and to administer his Holy Sacraments.

And he hath set *Bishops* over them, to see that they do their Office; and these Superiors are to ingage Men by their own Examples, as well as by their Authority.

There are several Abuses, and things which are destructive of Government; all which our wise and good Governor, the Lord

Lord Jesus, hath (as much as can be) by this Institution prevented. They are such such as these.

1. *Usurpation* of *Office.* This will quickly bring in the greatest Disorder imaginable into any State, if any Man may thrust himself into what Office he pleaseth: for, then Ambition will lead them to desire those things for which they are no way fitted; and divers will be aiming at the same, which would therefore bring in Everlasting Contentions.

To prevent this, our Saviour hath shewn by his own Example, that Men must not *take the honour* of such Offices *to themselves*; and by his Apostles hath strictly charged, that none *run before they be sent.* And therefore they did, in the first times of Christianity (which hath been continued ever since) solemnly *Ordain*, and set apart them by *Fasting* and *Prayer*, and *Imposition of Hands.*

But lest they should authorize Men, that were not fit for that Employment, we have, in several places of the inspired Epistles, the Qualifications and Characters of those Men who should be commissioned, 1 *Tim.* 3. 2, 3.

That they may not affect a boundless *Absoluteness*, he hath declared to them and others, that he is Supream, that they are all subject to him; and that therefore we are to *call no Man Master on Earth*: That is, own none here to be Absolute and Supream; account none to have *Dominion over our*

Faith. They are all under *Christ*, tho they be above us, and must be accountable to him. Nay, they must be owned and obeyed by us, no farther than they act in subordination to *Christ*.

4. Another great Abuse of Government is, *Arbitrarineſs*, by which I mean a lawleſs, unreaſonable, unaccountable impoſing on their Subjects; which if it happen to be of ſuch things as are grievous and burthenſome, and againſt all natural Equity, it is then Tyranny.

Our Saviour hath done much to prevent this alſo: for, himſelf hath given all thoſe Laws which are Fundamental and Eſſential, and hath left them on Record: So that Men can add none, but ſuch as are circumſtantial about Time or Place, or ſome ſuch things: and theſe alſo muſt not oppoſe and thwart, but be in ſubordination to thoſe Laws which our Supream Lord himſelf hath enacted. And,

5. By this he hath alſo prevented thoſe many *Innovations* which probably muſt otherwiſe have been; than which, perhaps, there is not a worſe Peſt to any Government. But in the Chriſtian Inſtitution, how are all probable Pretences of Innovating cut off? The Laws of Chriſt muſt not be repealed, but continue in force for ever; and they were found ſufficient to direct and regulate the Chriſtians Practice, in thoſe firſt Times when they lived beſt; and the Church was in the moſt flouriſhing, tho in the moſt perſecuted Condition.

I believe, all that have consulted History will attest this, That whatever Innovations have been made in the Christian Church, since the very first establishment of it, have been very hurtful and mischievous.

6. As this *Spiritual Government* doth not cross its own Ends, nor is inconsistent with it self; so neither doth it interfere with the *Civil* and *Secular Government*: but they may and do conspire together, to promote the welfare and good State, both of the Souls and Bodies of Men; as well in respect of this Life, as that to come.

7. Great care is taken, that the *Officers* discharge their *Trusts*, and perform the Duties of their Places: for, glorious Rewards are proposed and promis'd to them, that *shall convert Sinners from the Error of their Ways*, Dan. 12. 3. And terrible are the Threats denounced against those that neglect their Duty, *Ezek.* 3. 18. So that if reasonable Hopes and Fears will ingage Men to their Duty, our Saviour hath taken care to do it.

8. A Charge is laid upon the *People*, that they *obey* those that are set over them, *Heb.* 3. 17, *&c.*

But I proceed to consider those other Advantages which a Christian receives by being a *Member of the Church of Christ*, that excellent Society of Christians. I have already mentioned three; The

Fourth is, The excellently good *Laws* by which this Polity is to be governed. This will be evinced by considering,

1. The *Persons* to whom the *Christian Laws* are given; and they are All those to whom they are or may be known: but they who are actually and immediatly obliged by them, are All that have given up their Names to Christ; whether they be high or low, rich or poor, learned or ignorant, old or young. In whatsoever condition any Man is, if he call himself a *Christian* he is under the *Law of Christ*. None of the Society are exempted, neither St. *Peter* nor his Successors, nor whoever they be that assume to themselves the highest place in the Church, can plead they are not under Obligation to the *Laws*, which require all Men to *live soberly, righteously, and godlily*. They cannot make themselves Superiors to the *Laws of Humility* and *Meekness*, of *Temperance* and *Chastity*, of *Truth* and *Fidelity*, of *Innocence* and *Honesty*, of *Equity* and *Charity*, of *Devotion* and *Piety*. These and the rest of the *Christian Laws*, lay an Obligation on every Member of the Christian Church to obey them.

And this is a great Security to Men of the same Society, that all the Members of it are subject to the same Laws with themselves. None can plead an Exemption from, nor look on themselves as Superiors to the Laws of the Society. They are not the Makers of those Laws, and therefore can neither dispense with themselves nor others, for

for the breach of them: for, none that hath a less Power than that by which any Law was made, can controle it; and he that takes this upon him, assumes to himself a Power which belongs not to him.

Thus then we that are Christians, are all under the same Christian Law; and whosoever doth not obey it, is self-convicted, and a confess'd Criminal; he must own himself a Transgressor of the Laws of that Society of which he is.

But besides the Laws which oblige Christians in common, there are those which are given to Men, in those different Relations and Conditions, in which they are either antecedentally to, and independently on their being Christians, or consequently to this: That is, both Husbands and Wives, Fathers and Children, Masters and Servants, and all Subjects, as well as spiritual Governors and Teachers, and those that are under them, and taught by them. All those, nay and in all varieties of Conditions, in which Men usually are, they have Laws peculiar to that Relation or Condition in which they are.

There is scarce any particular Case can happen to any Man, in which the *Law of Christ* doth not direct him how to behave himself. And this leads us to another Consideration, which commends the Law of Christ, so that it is a great privilege to be in that Society which is under it; that is,

2. The *Matter* about which it is conver-ſant, which is no leſs than all the *Faculties* and Powers of *Humane Nature*, all the Works and Actions which Man does, not only the outward, but the inward, thoſe of the Soul, as well as thoſe of the Body; his Affections and Deſires, his Diſcourſes and Thoughts are regulated by this *Law*, as well as his Words and external Acts.

Under the former Particular, I ſaid, All Men to whom this *Law* is publiſh'd, were obliged by it; and in this I ſay, That all that is in Man, is under its Government. It regulates all our Thoughts of, and Affections to, and carriage towards God.

We are all required to love God with all our Heart, to fear him above all; to ſubmit to all his Diſpenſations chearfully, and in all we do, to refer to him principally.

In reference to each other, every Man is bound to be juſt and honeſt to all; nay, to be good and charitable to every other Man; to hurt, to injure none; neither to ſpeak evil of, nor do evil to any Man; to be kind to Friends, and to forgive Enemies; not to be angry with any raſhly.

I muſt not deſcend to Particulars, but this I may ſay in general, That the Laws of Chriſtianity regulate all our Affections and Actions toward one another, in ſuch ſort, that they engage us to do no kind of Evil to any one, but all manner of Good to every one in particular, (as far as that can conſiſt with the common Good of all.

And

And this the Christian Law doth consider so particularly, and so fully and perfectly, that there is no room for, no need of a review. Here is no Defect to be supplied by Equity. It is not so general, that it does not descend to Particular Instances. There is no Necessity of new Laws to be added, or a Dispensation from those that are already. As there is the great Justice, so the greatest Equity in the Laws of Christ.

Besides this, I also infer these two great Commendations of the Laws of Christ from what I have said.

(1.) That care is taken by them to prevent the *secret* commission of those Faults whereby one might hurt another. Tho humane Laws and Courts may never take cognizance of some Crimes; and if they do, may not condemn them; yet the *Christian Law* obliges in such Cases to forbear those Practices whereby we might prejudice our Brethren. We must not harm another, tho no Man does see, or can ever discover us. And we are injoined to do those good Offices to others, to which we are not tied by any humane Authority.

(2.) The very *Principles* of all Good and Evil Practices to our Neighbours, are the Matter of the *Christian Law:* For, those Affections, nay, the very first Motions and Thoughts, that lead to do them Evil, are restrain'd, and (as far as they can be supposed to fall under our Liberty) forbid. And therefore not only Murder, but Hatred, and Malice, and Envy, yea, unjust Anger, and

and even Uncharitableneſs, are forbidden: and whoſoever allows himſelf in ſuch evil Affections as theſe, tranſgreſſes the Law of Chriſt.

All thoſe immoderate and unreaſonable Appetites and Deſires of Honours, and Riches, and Pleaſures, which are the Springs of all Injuſtice and Injuries to our Brethren, are prohibited, and as much as may be ſuppreſſed and cut off by the *Law*.

Thus it is not in Humane Laws, they cannot take ſuch an effectual Courſe to prevent the ſecret Practices of Miſchief: and they do not ſo much as pretend to command or forbid Mens inward Thoughts and Affections.

3. Let us conſider the End at which the *Chriſtian Law* aims: That is in general, ultimately the Perfection and Happineſs of all Men; but more eſpecially and immediatly, the Perfection of Vertue and Holineſs in them who obey it. Which will be eaſily underſtood by this, That this *Law* directs and ingages to all vertuous and good Practices. As many as are obedient to it, have, by doing well, attained an excellent Temper; and are from this *New Nature* diſpoſed, conſtantly and ſtrongly inclin'd to do well. So that now they act from an *inward Principle*, from a *Nature*, a *Life*; and by this means they are fill'd with *Satisfaction* and *Joy*. And being now in a diſpoſition to uſe themſelves, and what they have, to the beſt and the wiſeſt Purpoſes; that is, for the Perfection of all God's Creatures,

and

and thereby for the Service, and Pleaſure, and Honour of God himſelf, they are in the likelieſt way, and have taken the beſt courſe to receive more outward Advantages and Acceſſions of Power from him, who is alway deſigning and doing the greateſt Good; and whoſe uſual Method is, to give to them who improve what they have. And ſo all other Perfections, and what-ever elſe is requiſite to compleat the greateſt Happineſs, of which Humane Nature is capable, may well be expected to follow Perfection of Holineſs.

But then beſides, as to other Men; ſee how their good State is alſo conſequent on the Holineſs of them who obey the Goſpel. For, according as they attain to more Perfection, they are by their very Natures inclined, as well as ingaged by particular Precepts, to communicate their good things to their Brethren; and when themſelves are become Vertuous, to be diligent and reſtleſs in their Endeavours, to make other Men ſo too: and conſequently to do them all the good Offices, in all kinds, which are in their Power.

Thus I have briefly ſhewed, That the *End of the Commandment*, or Goſpel-Declaration, is the doing good to one another, and to all Men, by ſhewing how it effects this, and brings it to paſs.

And is not this an admirable Advantage, to be of a Society;

(1.) Where the Law does not, as the Laws of too many Societies do, intend the

Evil

and Miſchief, if not to the moſt, yet to very many?

Nor (2.) where it does not only aim at ſome petty, inconſiderable, inferior Good, which is only good in a Subordination and Subſerviency to ſome higher, which is the Caſe of the Laws of all Civil Corporations.

But (3.) it aims at the greateſt, and higheſt, and beſt Good; and not only of the Generality, but of all and every one that are Members of this Society, nay, and of every Man in the World: Not only the preſtnt temporary; but alſo, and more eſpecially, the future and everlaſting Happineſs of them.

4. Let us conſider the *Authority*, which is no leſs than that of the *Soveraign Lord* of Men and Angels. It is no petty and controlable, nor yet an unjuſt and uſurped Power, by which this Law is enacted. It is not the decree of Impotence, or Folly, or Madneſs; nor is it the Effect of the greateſt, wiſeſt, and juſteſt earthly Powers: but it is the Determination of Heaven, the Counſel of the infinite Wiſdom, and Goodneſs, and Power which made, and now upholds the World.

All which manifeſtly appears from the Harmony of this *Law*, with the *Principles* of our *Nature* and Creation; and alſo from the direct tendency it hath to the Perfection and Happineſs of Mankind. For which Reaſons, we cannot but think it a Contrivance of the Maker and Preſerver of Man, the infinitely good God.

And

And beſides; this Law was ſo atteſted with mighty Wonders and Miracles, ſuch as by their Goodneſs and Greatneſs proclaimed their Author.

Now a Law, enacted by ſuch an Authority, muſt neceſſarily come with a great Force upon the Minds of them that are ſubject: For, if the Command of a King come with Power, How unreſiſtible muſt we think the Commands of God himſelf? How will it engage every one to Obedience? And then, how happy muſt they needs be, who live in a Society where the Laws of God are ſo carefully obſerved?

There are few Societies in the World ſo ill veſted with Laws, but that if they be obey'd out of reverence to the Authority that made them, the Members of it will be in a good State. How much more muſt it be ſo here, where the Laws have ſuch an immediate and direct tendency, to make thoſe that obſerve them perfect and happy? where they do ſo ſtraitly injoin a mutual care of, and love to one another?

3. The *Sanction* on which our *Chriſtian Law* is eſtabliſhed, is next to be conſidered. By this I underſtand (as all do) thoſe *Rewards*, but eſpecially *Puniſhments*, which are promis'd and threatned, whereby the *Hopes* and *Fears* of Men are excited, and they by them engaged to Obedience, and deterr'd from the Tranſgreſſion of the Laws?

This ſeems to me as a *Reſerve*, which wiſe Law-givers have for fooliſh, and inconſiderate, and degenerate Men. For, whilſt Men

Men are Wise and Good, they will discover the Good at which the Law aims, and that will be sufficient to move them to Obedience: as well it may, for this contains not only their own, but also their Brethrens good State. But when they are grown so foolish, as not to see what the Law intends, or so wicked as not to regard it; at least so unnatural as to mind none but themselves, then comes in the Supplement of the *Sanction*, which propounds and promises great Rewards to the Obedient: and if they be sunk so low, as not to desire to better their Condition, or at least not much to desire it, then they are presented and menaced with Evils to awaken and alarm their Fears; which seems the last hold that can be taken of Man, to bring him to a good State. And it is the Principle which is most operative, in the worst and most degenerate of Men.

Now what greater or better *Promises* can be made, than those which in the Gospel are given us, to encourage our Obedience? For, we are assured, that if we *patiently continue in well-doing*, we shall receive the *pardon of Sin*; and not only that, but also *Eternal Life* and *Happiness*.

And what more terrible *Threats* can be made, than those which are denounced against all *ungodly and unrighteous* Men, that *obey not the Gospel of Christ?* For it is said, That they *shall be punished with everlasting Destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his Power*, &c. 2 *Thess.* 1.9. 6. And

6. And lastly; as to the *publication* of those *Laws* (which is also necessary to make them obligatory) this is so plain, and they are so knowable and easy, that not only the Wise and Considering, but the Rash and the Ignorant may understand, both what the Laws require, and of whom; and what is their End, and who their Author; and what will be consequent on the observance or violation of them.

Whosoever is capable of the plainest *sense*, and will believe the most unquestionable *Tradition*; whoever observes *Humane Nature*, and is acquainted with his own *Faculties* and *Inclinations*, or will be concluded by *Experience*, he will be fully resolved that these are the *Laws of the Kingdom of Christ*, and that they intend the *Good* of the *Christian Church*; nay, of the whole *World* of Mankind; and that they have *God* for their *Author*, and are established on so firm a *Sanction*. He cannot doubt this; Men of little and low Understanding, may be very sure of all this, it comes with so clear an Evidence. And if they have any assurance, it will constrain them to Obedience: and if it hath this Effect, How happy must that Society be, where they all conspire together, to make themselves, and one another, and all Men, as happy as they can possibly?

O how pleasant a sight is this, to see Brethren thus united, to see every Man loving every one as his Brother, nay, as himself? But how blessed a thing is it, not only to behold

behold this, but to partake of it, to be one of that loving Corporation, where every Member is touched with a ſenſe of the Infirmities of the others, and altogether do conſpire to promote each others Good and Welfare?

This is the State of the *Chriſtian Church* in reſpect of its *Laws*. How much better than either the Gentile or the Jewiſh? Nay, how much better are our *Laws* than our *Lives*? Our Laws are far more excellent than any that have ever been in the World; but our Lives, I doubt, are not better; nay, I wiſh they be not worſe than others. If the Laws be good, we ſhould, and therefore we may live well if we will, and it is our fault if we do not.

Here I might compare the Jewiſh and the Gentile Laws with the Chriſtian, not only thoſe Doctrines of the Rabbies, and the Laws of the famous Law-makers amongſt the Heathens, but even the Laws of Nature and of *Moſes*, and ſhew how far ſhort they were of the Law of Chriſt: But I ſhall not enter on this Argument now.

See our Saviour's Law, in the 5*th*, 6*th*, and 7*th* Chapters of St. *Matthew*, and other places of the Goſpel; and the ends of moſt of the Epiſtles.

Fifthly; I proceed briefly to the *Diſcipline* which is appointed to be uſed in the *Church* toward Offenders. This we have ſet down *Mat.* 18. 15, 16, 17, 21, 22. compared with *Luke* 17. 3, 4.

If

If thy Brother sin against thee, &c.

1. We are not to understand this of every petty trivial Offence, (for such as these must be pardoned of course) but of some greater and more hainous Fault and Injury perhaps.

2. Nor is this to be restrained to Sins against our selves, so as to exclude those that are committed against other Men, or against God. The Sins against God, are against all Men. This premised; 1. Thou art to go to the Offender alone, and privately, betwixt thee and him, tell him his Fault: and if he own it, and confess, then proceed no further. If he do not receive thy Admonition, then, 2. take one or two more. And if he reject their Reproof also; then, 3. *tell the Church*: Make it known to the Governor of the Society, and let him in the publick Assembly admonish and reprove him. But if he still persist obstinately in his Crimes, then let him be to thee as an *Heathen*, as one that is shut out of the Society.

And our Saviour hath determin'd, That as often as he repents, he must be forgiven, *Mat.* 18. 22. *Luke* 17. 4.

We find the Apostle St. *Paul*, according to this Rule of our Saviour, giving direction to the *Thessalonians*, 2 Epist. 3. *v.* 6, 14. *To withdraw from those Brethren that walk disorderly*; *i. e.* from those, the course of whose Life is such. And this may suppose, that the other former Methods have been

uſed. And *not to converſe with ſuch an one that he may be aſhamed.*

1 Cor. 5. 5. *To deliver an inceſtuous Perſon up to Satan.* That is, to caſt him out of the *Church*; and ſo he muſt fall under the Power of the *Devil*, under whoſe Dominion all they were ſuppoſed to be, who were not in the *Kingdom of Chriſt*; and he then exerciſed his Power over them, inflicting divers Diſeaſes on them, even *to the deſtruction of the Fleſh, that the Spirit may be ſaved*, &c.

Verſ. 11. *If any that is called a Brother, be a Fornicator, or Covetous, or an Idolater, or a Reviler, or a Drunkard, or an Extortioner, not to keep Company, nor to eat with ſuch an one*, either in Civil or Sacred Converſe.

From theſe and the like Paſſages of Scripture, we may obſerve, That the *Diſcipline* preſcrib'd to be uſed in the *Chriſtian Church*, is highly commendable, in that it inflicts Puniſhments

1. That are proper and very naturally conſequent on the Offence: for, ſo it is, to *withdraw from the Company* of one that is injurious to me or others; and to put him out of the *Church*, that *will not hear the Church*, *to deliver him up to Satan, that will not have Chriſt to rule over him.* Men that thus offend, do, as it were, by their very Offences, execute theſe Puniſhments on themſelves.

2. The Penalties are very Humane, ſuch as will chiefly work on Men's Underſtandings and Modeſty, and do ſuppoſe their

Love

Love to Vertue, and Sense of Religion, and Value for the Christian Institution: *To admonish, to withdraw from, to account him as an Heathen*; to shut him out of the *Church*.

Indeed there followed upon this, *Diseases* and *Death*; but these were instructive, and by such Punishments, greater might be, and were prevented.

3. They were as gentle and easy as could be inflicted; no more than Necessity, and the Nature of the Crime extorted. They were gradual. And yet,

4. Sufficiently severe; that if a Man had any Sense of Goodness, they must reclaim him.

5. Yet even the most severe were very charitable. They were not inflicted to satisfy Revenge and Malice; but in compliance with Love, and to carry on the Designs of Charity.—*That the Spirit may be saved*; *and thou hast gain'd thy Brother*. No other end.

Sixthly; The Holy *Solemnities* and Sacred *Rites* (to which every one, as a Christian, is admitted in the publick Assemblies) are such as are instructive to those that use them; as well as full of Argument, to ingage them to the practice of Vertue; and they have a manifest aim and tendency, to make all that are admitted to them truly religious toward God, and to unite them in Love to each other.

Besides; we may well suppose the Divine Blessing and Influence on these his own *Institutions* and *Ordinances*; and that we receive more good by them, than is naturally consequent on the use of them.

I may refer them to these three Heads.

1. *Praying to God.*
2. *Hearing his Word.*
3. *The Sacraments.*

1. *Prayer* is one of the first and most natural of those Acknowledgments we make to God. And there is no holy good Man, that is not frequent in this: For, he is sensible of his dependance on God, and therefore he supplicates; he knows his own Guilt, and therefore confesseth; he understands his own Inability, and God's Power and Readiness to help others, and therefore he intercedes; and upon the receipt of any Good, he gives Thanks: and by all he praises and glorifies the great Power and Wisdom, the Goodness and Holiness of God. He owns him to be the Great and Good God, on whom all depend; and who governs the World, and is the Author of all that Good which we or others enjoy; that he hath Right to our Obedience, and may require of, and do with us what he will.

All this we ascribe to God by our Prayers and Praises, by our Confessions of our Faults, and Intercessions for our Brethren.

This

This is a piece of Worship so due to God, that we may not alienate it from him; it is an incommunicable Honour, which must not be given to any of his Creatures.

This is so just, and so fit a thing, that every one is naturally inclined to, and can hardly be with-held from it: Rather than not do it at all, they will pay this Homage where it is not due, and pray to Stocks and Stones, or to Men, that cannot hear, nor help them.

All which shews that we have a secret sense of our Dependance on God, and our Obnoxiousness to him, and of his Perfections. This is inherent in us, and we cannot but know it: and if we would carefully observe and trace this Inclination, it would lead us to the knowledg of God, and we should easily infer that he must be powerful, and wise, and good, and holy.

Now tho no good Man can be with-held from frequently addressing himself to God in this manner, (for his Mind will silently ejaculate his good thoughts of God, and his holy Fervors will ascend up to Heaven, like the Fumes of sweet Incense; and he hath also his constant Times of *entring into his Closet, and shutting his Door*, and there pouring out his very Soul before *Him that sees in secret, and will reward openly*) yet besides all this, his great Humility in himself, and Charity to others, and Desire of God's Glory, make him to set a great value on the *Publick Prayers*; and it is, and ought to be a thing of great account, to join with the

Assembly in Prayer and Thanksgiving to God. When a Man confesseth his own and his Brethrens Faults thus publickly, it must necessarily lay an Engagement on him for the future, to be careful to prevent the Repetition of the same, or the Commission of any others, by himself, or his Brethren who join with him. His Intercession for others, and theirs for him, doth both suppose, and will increase their mutual Love and Friendship.

But all those Acknowledgments of the Divine Goodness, which are made in the solemn *publick* Prayers and Praises of the holy *Congregation*, as they proceed from true and right thoughts of God, and becoming Affections towards him; so they tend to continue and increase their Knowledg and Devotions, and will have a mighty Influence on their Love and Good-will to each other. For, whilst they pray and give thanks for one another, they are in the greatest exercise and highest expression of their Love to one another, that can be; and by this they engage themselves to use their utmost endeavours to do all good Offices for, and to make one another as happy as they can: For they that pray to God for the greatest Blessings of Heaven upon their Brethren, will not fail to do all they can toward the procuring of that Happiness for them, which in their Prayers they have desired of God.

And whosoever he be, that joins with the Publick Assemblie in Prayers for all the Congre-

Congregation, but in private oppoſeth the Welfare and good Eſtate of any, or that doth not conſtantly and heartily endeavour it; he proclaims to the World that he is an Hypocrite, that he goes about to mock God, and to cheat the World, in that he pretends to pray for the Welfare, but acts for the Ruine of his Neighbour.

Again; the joining together in the ſame Religious Worſhip, the doing the ſame Actions, tends greatly to Love and Unity; eſpecially when by this we diſcover our ſelves to have the ſame Deſires and Deſigns, as Men that pray together do.

Beſides, a Man may reaſonably expect to receive greater Benefits on the account of the united Prayers of many, than of his own ſingle ones: and therefore our Saviour hath made the Promiſe to *two or three met*, and agreeing together to ask any thing.

It is on this conſideration, that an humble Chriſtian relies ſo much on the *Prayers of the Church*; and even when he is in ſecret, he is comforted with the thoughts, that the Prayers of the whole *Catholick Church* are made to God on his behalf.

And this I heartily wiſh they would conſider, who make ſo ſmall account of thoſe good Prayers, which are the *Common-Prayers of our whole Church*, and are uſed by all the Members of it.

2. *Hearing the Word* of God frequently *read*, and ſometimes *expounded*. But is this ſuch an Advantage? Yes ſurely. Two ſorts of Men will look on it as a great Pri-

vilege, only to have the Word of God read to them: 1. Thoſe that cannot read it themſelves. 2. They who have it not in a known Tongue.

And hence it was, that in the beginning of the Reformation here in *England*, when it was firſt order'd that the Bible ſhould be read in Engliſh in the Congregation, that the People flock'd ſo very much to the Churches. Tho this is a thing now deſpiſed, and Men make no account of coming into Church till after the Chapters, as if it was nothing to have the Word of God read, by one whoſe Office it is to proclaim the Divine Counſel.

But if any will pretend, that he can read the Bible as well at home, and it is all one to have it read by one of his own Family, as by Chriſt's Miniſter and Officer: I will only ſay this, That the ſacred Place, and the Time ſet apart for this thing, and the Preſence of others, may all contribute to his greater attendance to, and better obſervation of it. *Mirum Judicium oritur ex aliorum præſentia.* And when I ſee many others hearkning to the Word read, it will excite my Attention, and thereby help my Underſtanding.

I need not put you in mind, that care hath been taken in ſelecting thoſe Portions of Scripture to be publickly read, which are moſt eaſy to be underſtood, and moſt uſeful and neceſſary to be remembred and practiſed.

But if a Man ſhould perſuade himſelf, that no Benefit will come to him by conforming

forming to the Orders of the Church, in coming to the publick Assembly to hear the Word of God read; yet he ought to do this, for the sake of that *Society* of which he is a Member, and for the sakes of the Ignorant, who by their attendance on the publick reading of the Word, will proclaim to the World that they are the only ignorant Persons, if none else will come to hear it: And the Shame of this may make them absent themselves too, because they would not be look'd upon as so altogether, and only without understanding. Therefore to encourage and keep them in countenance, even such as can themselves read, should come to Church to hear the Scriptures read, tho there are other Reasons to move them to this.

But besides the bare reading, there is also the *Expounding* of the *Word of God* in the Publick Congregations, and it is applied to particular Cases: For, this is the business both of all *Catechising* and *Preaching*. Where any Text is not at all, or so well understood, there the Minister doth expound it by some plainer Text, or by an Interpretation of the Original; and he always shews its agreement with the common Notions and Sense of Mankind.

And if any be so careless or dull, as not to deduce the particular Consequences they might, nor make use of it to direct their own Practices, they are helped by the Sermon in those matters.

And thus by hearing the Divine Commands,

mands, and Promiſes, and Threatnings read, and explained, and applied, Mens Underſtandings are increaſed, their Memories refreſhed, their Affections quickned, and conſequently their Practice is better'd. For the Word of God, where it is underſtood and believed, where it is entertained and kept, it will have this certain Effect, to help Men to live holy and vertuous Lives; for it is a Spirit of Holineſs and Purity that breaths in thoſe Divine Writings, and they have this only deſign to make Men good.

3. The laſt of the Benefits I mentioned, which the Chriſtian hath in the publick Aſſemblies, is the *Sacraments*.

I have already ſaid ſomething concerning *Baptiſm*, which is the initial Rite that is uſed at our firſt Admiſſion, which ſolemnizes, and as it were confirms and ratifies the Engagement, which the Proſelite to Chriſtianity then takes upon him.

I might here add, that it cannot ſeem improbable to expect the ſecret and unſeen, tho not unfelt Bleſſing of God to be conveyed upon the Obſervance of his own Inſtitution, and the Prayers which are made by the Church on the behalf of the Party baptized.

The other *Sacrament* of the *Lord's-Supper*, if we conſider by whom, and at what time it was inſtituted, we ſhall look on it as a mighty Privilege to be admitted to it: For our Saviour ordained it, and he did this at the time of his Death, when he was about to give the greateſt Inſtance of his Love to us, that ever the World had.

If

If we think how frequently it was uſed by the Primitive Chriſtians, and what an Eſteem they had of it, we ſhall by this alſo be perſuaded, that it is a very valuable thing. But on the other hand, if we make an Eſtimate of it according to the Judgment of our own Times, we muſt then look on it, as having either much Evil, or very little Good in it, for elſe ſure Men could not poſſibly neglect it as they do.

But let us not judge of it by any extrinſecal Conſiderations whatſoever. Let us conſider the Nature of the Thing it ſelf, and the excellent Uſes it ſerves, and then we ſhall better diſcern the Advantages it brings.

The thing we are to do, is to commemorate the great Performances of our *Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, which were conſummated in that painful and ignominious *Death* he underwent for our ſakes: This we are commanded to do in eating Bread, and drinking Wine.

Now whilſt we do an Action which ſo well becomes us, and that is ſo honourable to our deareſt Lord, we receive unto our ſelves unconceivable Benefits: For, when we look on *Chriſt crucified* for our Sins, as the *Sacrifice* offered for us, this ſhews us the Heinouſneſs of Sin, and makes us more ſenſible of, and ſorrowful for the Sins we have committed; as alſo more to deteſt and reſolve againſt all Sin for time to come.

This alſo convinceth us of God's Right to challenge our Obedience, and to puniſh us for our Default. And he doth by this Inſtance

Inſtance (ὡς ἐν τύπῳ) ſhew us what we are to expect, if we continue in a ſinful Practice.

Again; When we look on the *Sacrifice*, as accepted and eſteemed by God, this will increaſe our value of Obedience to the *Divine Law*, and we ſhall ſet an higher Price on Holineſs; for it was this which made our Saviour's Oblation ſo acceptable unto God.

This will alſo encourage our *Faith and Hope in God*, when we conſider that a *Sacrifice* hath been offered, and is accepted on our behalf.

When we take a view of our dying Saviour, as our Example and Patern, we then learn the moſt perfect *Submiſſion* of our *Wills*, the moſt entire *Reſignation* of our *Selves* to the *Will of God*, the moſt unconquerable Patience, the greateſt Reſolution, and yet the moſt of Mildneſs, and above all, the moſt univerſal and intenſe *Love* that can be expreſt; Love to Enemies, to malicious and wicked Perſecutors, to be deſiring heartily, and earneſtly endeavouring their Welfare, whilſt they are eagerly ſeeking our Ruine.

And when we have had Chriſt ſet before us, as dying for our Brethren, this will engage us alſo to do or ſuffer any thing for them. We cannot but draw this eaſy Concluſion, *If he ſo loved us, we ought alſo to love one another.*

I mention only some, and those but a few, of the Advantages which we may and do receive by the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, for the increase of our Holiness, and our Peace. And this may suffice at present to the Sixth Particular; I now proceed to the Seventh and last.

Seventhly; The wise and good *Counsels*, together with the holy and virtuous *Examples* of the Members of this Society, both those that are on Earth, and those that are in Heaven.

There is no Member of the *Christian Church*, who wants Counsel, or deserves Reproof, or to whom Exhortation is necessary, but lives among those who both can and will (as Occasion serves) advise, and rebuke, and persuade him: for the Christian is fully instructed in what is good and fit; and it is his duty not to suffer Sin upon his Brother, but we are to *exhort one another daily* to the practice of Holiness.

And if we look into the Remains of the good Men, who in former Ages were Members of the Church on Earth, we shall find a rich Treasure of most wise and excellent *Counsels*, that will direct our Behaviour in every Condition we can fall into. These are extant in the Books of the Scripture, and in other Writings of a Christian Spirit and Temper.

And as for the *Examples*, how many are those that have gone before us in the ways of Holiness and Vertue, whose Practice is

our

our ſure Guide in the ways that lead to Happineſs. I need not mention thoſe known and celebrated Names of *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*, of *Job*, and *David*, and the Prophets of the Lord, who were all Members of the ſame Church, of which the *Eternal Word*, the *only Begotten of the Father*, *is the Head*.

Beſides theſe ancient Worthies, we have the Lives of thoſe good Men, who were with, and ſince our Saviour, who have ſet us the faireſt Copies of Meekneſs and Humility, of an undaunted Courage, a firm Patience, an Obedience to Superiors, a Juſtice and Honeſty in all Dealings, an univerſal Charity and Good-will, an exact Temperance, a true and an excellent Religion: In ſhort, they have gone before us in all the ways of Holineſs and Goodneſs.

But over and above, and which is more than all theſe, we have upon ſure Record the moſt admirable Patern of Goodneſs that ever the World ſaw, in the moſt *excellent Life* of our moſt *bleſſed Lord*. There is Holineſs in perfection, and Vertue in its moſt exalted ſtate; there we ſee the utmoſt poſſibilities of Goodneſs, to which Human Nature can be raiſed on this Earth.

This and the reſt of thoſe great Examples, ſerve to inſtruct our Ignorance, to quicken our Dulneſs, and to encourage our Faintings and Deſpondencies.

Beſides theſe, we have Examples of Men now alive, which teach us Religion and Vertue, and engage us to practiſe it. As bad

bad as the World is, there are thoſe who ſhine as Lights in the midſt of the darkneſs of this Earth. There are many whom the Grace of God hath *taught to live ſoberly, and righteouſly, and godly*; who keep their Appetites and Paſſions under due reſtraint, and good government, ſo that they are harmleſs in their Converſation; and not only ſo, but they live to the good purpoſes of promoting their own and other Mens good Eſtate and Welfare.

I have now briefly touched upon the Privileges Men do or may receive by being Members of the Chriſtian Church; but I have not in my Diſcourſe obſerved the Method which I intended, becauſe I would be ſhorter; I ſhall therefore only mention how it is with them in reſpect of God, and of the Devil.

And briefly, the Caſe is thus in reſpect of God, That it is a matter of far leſs difficulty for us, who have the Goſpel, and live tho but in the outward Communion with the Church, to repent of our Sins, and become good Men, and to live holy Lives, than it was or is to any others. This is now made ſo practicable, ſo feaſible a matter, that no Man falls ſhort of it, who is not fooliſhly obſtinate, unaccountably ſottiſh, and unnaturally neglectful of himſelf, and careleſs of his own Happineſs: ſo that whoever fails, it muſt be reſolved into his own groſs ſtupidity, ſottiſhneſs, and ſelf-neglect; for he is now put into a condition and capacity of

of receiving the greateſt Mercies from the Divine Bounty, and is in the way in which God uſually does communicate them.

But as many as are recovered out of a ſtate of Sin, to a Life of Vertue, their paſt Sins are all pardoned, their frequent Infirmities and Shortneſſes are alſo remitted, ſo as they ſhall not riſe up in Judgment to condemn them: and they have eternal Life aſcertain'd to them, by the immutable *Promiſe of that God who cannot lie.* They are under his Protection and ſpecial Providence, who orders all things that befall them, ſo as that they turn to their Advantage, and are made ſerviceable to their Vertue, and will increaſe their Happineſs.

Laſtly; As to the Devil, the *Prince of the Power of the Air, the Spirit that works in the Children of Diſobedience:* They are redeem'd from under his Vaſſalage, he hath now no more Power over them; he cannot domineer over their Souls or Bodies, as he did before the coming of our Saviour: His Oracles are ſilenced, his Power leſſened; the *Light of the glorious Goſpel* hath ſcatter'd the Powers of Darkneſs, ſo that now they creep into the Corners of the Earth.

Now that Mens Souls are freed from the Ignorance, and thoſe Errors under which they were held, their Bodies are alſo free from the Helliſh Cruelties of Tyrannical Fiends: They are no longer under the Power of Satan, now that they are become Subjects of the Kingdom of Chriſt, who hath conquered and triumphed over the Head

Head of the Apostate Spirits, *and hath the Keys of Hell and Death.*

Thus I have briefly represented the great Benefits which accrue to Men by being *Members of the Church of Christ*, whether we consider them as single Persons, or as in Societies, with reference to *God*, or the *Devil*. For, whether we consider the Greatness and Largeness, the vast Extent and long Continuance of the *Church*, or the excellent Wisdom and Goodness of many of its Members; whether we look on the Engagement laid upon them in their first Admission into the Church, or the admirable Order and Government of it, or the incomparably good Laws which are given to all its Members, or the proper and wholesom Discipline which is used in it, or the Religious Exercises which are used in the Publick Assemblies, we must necessarily confess, that all these will have a mighty Influence on Men, to make them good in themselves, and good in all their Relations. And if they become good, they are then from under the Dominion of the Devil, and within the Kingdom, and so under the Protection and Care of the Soveraign Lord of Men and Angels: and they continuing to do well, shall be Partakers of everlasting Life and Happiness.

This is the Condition, these are the *Privileges* of every true Christian, of every Man, who is not grosly wanting to himself, and careless of his own manifest greatest and best Interests.

The Inferences I would make, are these two:

I. Let us then set an high value upon the Christian Religion in general; and in particular, on our being Members of that Body of which Christ is the Head. Since so many, and such inestimable Advantages accrue to us by being parts of this Society; let us take the greatest care to preserve our selves in Union with it: Let us not, as too many in our Days are, be indifferent whether we be of this Body, or no: Let us not needlessly separate our selves from it. Do not make slight Account of those Censures, which cut us off from the Church: for if they be exercised, *non errante Clave*, that is, upon good ground, a just Cause, and by a just Authority, God confirms in Heaven, what his Commissioners do upon Earth: Whose Sins they remit or retain, are remitted or retained by him also. And if there be a Male Administration, yet the excommunicated Person is deprived of some Benefits which otherwise he might have.

Have

I Have a great regard for that Body, of which whoſoever is a Member, hath ſo great Privileges. Be careful not to make any unneceſſary and unnatural Diviſions and Schiſms in it, or to do any thing that may tend to the diſſolution of that moſt excellent Society.

II. Let us behave our ſelves as becomes the Members of this excellent Society; and let our Lives and Tempers, our Devotion towards God, our Juſtice and Charity towards Men, our good Government of our ſelves according to the Rules of Temperance and Moderation; let theſe make it manifeſt, what excellent Advantages we have by being Members of the Chriſtian Church.

We have Advantages above others; let us ſhew this by living better Lives than others: If we be not much better than other Men, we muſt needs be far worſe.

Let us not be ſo fooliſh as to neglect the Advantages we have. *Forſake not the aſſembling of your ſelves together, as the manner of ſome is*, &c. Neglect not the Sacraments, as too too many do.

I conclude all, by reminding you, in ſhort, of the Advantages of which I have ſpoken: And deſire you,

1. To consider Men singly. And,
2. In Societies.

And under the First;

That their Knowledg and Wisdom, their Vertue and Goodness, their Quiet and Peace, their Joy and Pleasure, their future and everlasting Happiness, are further'd and secured by their being Members of this Society.

Under the second;

That this sacred Society is a great Security to, and Establishment of that Order, which is necessary to all Civil Societies, and doth greatly conduce to their Peace and Prosperity, *i. e.* Wealth and Credit, which is their End. This Society is so far from interfering with the Civil, that it is very beneficial to them, for it preserves and confirms them.

All this Good is procured by Mens being incorporated into the Body of Christ, as appears,

First; By the first Admission and Entrance into the Church, which is done by a publick Profession of the Religion of Christ, a being baptized into the *Name of Father, Son, and Holy-Ghost*: And which must lay a great Engagement upon us to live holy and excellent Lives, that so we may live answerably to the Profession

we have made, and the Engagement we have taken upon us.

Secondly; This will alſo appear hugely beneficial to that excellent Order and Government, which is ſetled and is to be obſerved in the Church; but eſpecially thoſe incomparably good Laws, which are given to this Society, thoſe eſpecially which are peculiar to it: Thoſe of Love, and doing good to all; in eſpecial manner, of Love to one another, of forgiving even Enemies, of Meekneſs, *&c.*

And alſo that moſt humane and proper Diſcipline, which is preſcribed to be uſed toward Offenders: For, this is a Government, whoſe deſign is the Increaſe of every Man's Vertue and Happineſs.

And this Government is ſo excellently contrived, that the particular and private Intereſts of any do never claſh or interfere with the publick Intereſt of the Society in general.

And tho many Corruptions and Abuſes have crept into the Government of the Chriſtian Church; yet even in a very Male-Adminiſtration of it, there are ſtill great Helps to Vertue: And thoſe very Formalities, and Shadows, and Names of ſome Offices and Things, which remain, may ſerve to put us in mind what ought to be, and what we ſhould take care to do, or to avoid.

It is in this, as in other Governments, better to be under bad ones, than none at all; and more eligible to bear the Corruptions of Men, who are at preſent in place of Power, than to attempt a Change of the Conſtitution, or to go about to alter the Government it ſelf.

Thirdly; The Archives and Records of this Society, which are contained in the Books of the Old and New Teſtament, (which indeed it is poſſible a Man may have, that is not of this Society; but by his being of it, he is entitled to this Privilege) he now hath free acceſs to them.

And how much theſe Divine Records tend to enlighten Mens Minds, and to purify their Hearts, only they know, who have uſed them. *There* we have upon Record the firſt Original of this excellent Society, the gradual Diſpenſations of God to his Church of all Ages; the Examples and Lives of many of the Members of it, but eſpecially the Holy Jeſus; the Acts of Government and Diſcipline, which have been in the firſt Age after Chriſt.

Fourthly; The Publick Aſſemblies for the Exerciſe of Religion, to which they are admitted: Where,

1. They

1. They pray to God publickly for and with each other.

2. The Scriptures are read.

3. They receive the Sacrament of the Lord's-Supper, and Infants are baptized.

Fifthly; The Converſation, the Counſels, and Exhortations, and Reproofs, and Examples of their Fellow-Members.

All theſe tend to make Men vertuous, and that brings with it preſent Peace, and future Happineſs; for God loves, and will reward Vertue, *&c.*

OF LOVING OUR ENEMIES.

MATTH. 5. 44.

But I ſay unto you, Love your Enemies, bleſs them that curſe you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that deſpitefully uſe you, &c.

THeſe Words are enforced by a very great Authority, and it was neceſſary in the Opinion of ſome, that they ſhould be born up by the Credit of the *Law-giver:* that the repute of his Wiſdom and Goodneſs might take

take off the Scandal of Folly and Evil in the *Command*: For, with many this Text and divers others are contradictory to Reason, and oppoſite to the Nature of Man: than which Opinion, I know nothing more prejudicial to Chriſtian Religion.

For, if this be granted, it is then confeſs'd, that our Religion is falſe and evil; that whoſoever believes it, believes in Oppoſition to his Mind; and he that obeys it, doth it to his own Hurt; that he ruines himſelf, and depraves his Nature.

This Error tends to the utter Subverſion of Chriſtianity: For, it makes it impoſſible to be either believed, or practis'd: For no Man can give Credit to that, which contradicts what he cannot doubt; and no Man can do that, which he is aſſured tends to his Deſtruction, as all Actions do, which are repugnant to his Nature.

No Man can believe what he cannot conceive, nor can he conceive a Contradiction, nor apprehend what is impoſſible; nor can he do that, which he thinks ſo evil, as that is, which is intrinſecally repugnant to his Nature.

He that hath entertain'd this Conceit, muſt alſo aſſert, that he who will believe the Articles of our Faith, muſt lay aſide his Reaſon; and he who will obey the Precepts of Chriſt, muſt put off his Nature, and ceaſe to be a Man, if he will be a Chriſtian.

But how unworthily doth this reflect upon God, by making him thus at odds with himſelf; that what he made at firſt, he after

ter deſtroys; that his Works of Creation and Redemption clash? It argues him to have forgot the Capacities of his Creatures, when he makes a Revelation of that, which is unconceivable by them; or hath required them to do what is not poſſible they ſhould do; and doth all this for their Advantage, which will infallibly ruine them.

Beſides; What a diſparagement is this to Religion? How juſtly is that ſuſpected for a Cheat, where to the belief of its Articles, and practice of its Duties, Men muſt be Unreaſonable and Unnatural? And how doth this open a door to Error and evil Practice, by depoſing Reaſon, and caſting off Nature? For, he that doth this in any Caſe, may for ought I know, do it in every one; and then he muſt believe all that is told, and do all that is bid him; and then he will believe Lies, and practiſe Wickedneſs.

In ſhort; This Opinion takes away from Chriſtians all means of diſtinguiſhing Truth from Falſhood, it ſubverts the Foundations of all Diſcourſe, it leaves no differences of Good and Evil. All this is moſt true, if Man muſt believe what is contrary to the undoubted Principles, and the trueſt Diſcourſes of his Reaſon, or do what is repugnant to his Nature.

He that is thus perſwaded, hath caſt off his ſure and faithful Guide, and now muſt wander after Fancy, and be at the Mercy of every one, who will pretend Inſpiration.

This evil and falſe Opinion was occaſion'd by ſome Mens Miſtake of this, and ſome few

few other Texts; which yet to them that have well consider'd, appear both consonant to Reason, and agreeable to Nature. / The Design of this Discourse is to remove that Prejudice, which many have entertained against this Precept of our Saviour, and to shew that it is not unreasonable, as many, whose Mistake and Passion make them unwilling to practise it, pretend it to be.

This will be very evident to them that consider;

I. The true Sense and Import of the Words.
II. The Reasonableness of that Practice which they direct to, and the Arguments which perswade to it. / And,
III. The Falseness of those Objections that are against it.

I. The true meaning of the Words will be apparent, if we consider,

1. The common Acception of them.

2. How they were understood of old; for they are here brought in, in opposition to what was then spoke, and so the Words must have the same Sense they then had.

3. The Relation and Order they have to other Precepts; for without this *Comparative* Knowledg of the Law it cannot be understood.

1. As to the common Acception of the Words, there can be no Controversy, because

cauſe the Philoſophers (who have frequently taken to themſelves a Liberty of impoſing their Senſe upon Words, yet) in this agree with the Vulgar, both of them underſtanding theſe two things by *Love*. 1. To wiſh and deſire well to any. 2. To do well to them.

1. To think well of, and towards another, to wiſh and deſire their Welfare, that is the Soul; to do them that Good which is wiſhed them, that is the Body of *Love*: both are eſſential and neceſſary to the being of a real *Love*.

This *Love* will expreſs it ſelf variouſly, according to the different Conditions of its Object, and the divers Degrees of its own Power. If the thing loved be very *good*, then *Love* puts on the *Garment of Gladneſs*, and is delighted in it. If it be in very bad State, and deſtitute of *Good*, then *Love* turns into *Pity*, and commiſerates. If it be unable to help, it ſtays in *Deſires*, and good Wiſhes; but if it have any *Power*, it exerts it, and goes forth into *Action*.

All agree, that to *love* is (according to St. *James*) not only to ſpeak good Words, but to have good Thoughts and Deſires; nor only to wiſh well, but alſo to do well, where we can. To ſpeak well is but the Picture of *Love*; to think well, is *Love* in the Womb; but to do well alſo, is *Love* brought forth, and perfect, now it is finiſhed.

Our Enemies are thoſe that *hate us*, that is, who both think, and do us *evil*, who both deſire and do us Miſchief: Neither of theſe

these alone are sufficient to denominate Men our *Enemies*. All grant our *Friends* may do us ill Offices, and they that heartily wish us well, may do that which they desire to do, who intend to ruin us; and yet we call them not *Enemies*. Nor on the other part, can we justly call any Man so, who hath Power to hurt us, and doth not; for we have no other way to know his Thoughts but by his Works; and if they do not yet come to these, it is an Argument they are not the setled Judgment of a Man's Mind; that they are not consented to; and no Man is to be censur'd for that which is a matter of Practice, and is not his practical Judgment.

No Man can be said to be, or to do any thing that merits Praise or Blame, where he hath not given his Consent, and where the Action is within his Power, and follows not, there he doth not consent.

2. These Words were so understood by them of old, as they generally are: This appears sufficiently by both the Doctrines and Practices of those *Jews* who were phariseiz'd, and wholly adhered to the *Traditions of the Elders*, and the Opinions of their *Doctors* and *Rabbies*. Their Carriage was such, as shewed they thought themselves not only permitted, but commanded to desire and do Evil to their *Enemies*; and all were such in their Esteem, who were not *Jews* or *Proselites*: And therefore they denied them common Offices of Civility, would not (*Monstrare vias eadem nisi sacra colenti*) so much

much as direct a Stranger in his way, if he were not of their *Religion*. And beſides, call'd them by moſt uncivil Names, as *Dogs*, &c. and would injure them by Fraud or Violence, and did all that which I before ſaid of *Love*, to thoſe of their own Nation.

So then the Words of the Text being ſpoken in oppoſition to their Opinion of old, muſt be underſtood in the ſame Senſe they took them in; and then the plain Senſe of our Saviour is; that we ſhould deſign their Good and Welfare, who deſire and intend ill to us. That we ſhould repay *Hatred* with *Love*, ill Offices with good ones: and in ſum, do well to them, that do evil to us; not requiting Hatred with Hatred, one ill turn with another.

3. Let us conſider the Words with *Relation* to other Precepts: This is neceſſary to be conſidered for the underſtanding the Bounds and Limits of any Precept, and conſequently how far it is obligatory.

There are two Propoſitions, which in general may ſerve for Rules, in the Interpretation of any Command, and they are not, that I know, denied by any.

First; That *no Action that is impoſſible, is commanded, and none that is neceſſary forbidden.* If any Laws be made that keep not within theſe Bounds, it argues Folly, and perhaps Cruelty in the Maker of them; and he to whom they are made, cannot be under any Obligation.

Second-

Secondly; *No Law that is particular, and of leſs moment, can null one that is greater and univerſally obliging:* Such are thoſe, *Love and do Good: Avoid Evil,* &c. And *where two good things are in Competition, and one is apparently better, chuſe the beſt*; becauſe that which is leſs good, *habet Rationem mali:* Ἀεὶ τὸ βέλτιϛον νόμῳ ἀβαρϱέϛατῳ: This is the untranſgreſſible Law; it is contrary to Nature to do otherwiſe, this is perpetually obliging: This is a Law which cannot be abrogated, from which no other Law can derogate in the leaſt. So that no Precept whatſoever can oblige any Perſon not to do that which is better: *Of two good things, the greater; of two Evils, the leſſer is always to be choſen:* And indeed Men naturally do chuſe that which they apprehend to be ſo.

Theſe two Rules premiſed, it is manifeſt that our Saviour, in this Precept of loving our Enemies, doth not command us;

1. To *love* any thing that is in it ſelf *Evil*, nor to be pleaſed with our own Harm conſidered in it ſelf: This is impoſſible for Humane Nature to do. He doth not by this intend to make us affected to Evil, as we are to Good. This we cannot be whilſt we are Men; our Nature muſt be firſt deſtroyed. Every one naturally and neceſſarily intends his own Preſervation, and is averſe from that which tends to his Ruine. The deſire of his own Preſervation and Perfection is a Principle ſo deeply ingraven in Man's Nature,

ture, that it cannot be obliterated. Nor,

2. Are we here commanded to do no Evil to thoſe who are *our Enemies*. Men who are competent Judges of Offences, and who have Power and Right to puniſh Offenders, are not hereby forbidden to inflict Penalties on them, where other Methods will be probably ineffectual, to remove or prevent ſome greater Evils. This makes doing ill to any, not only excuſable, but neceſſary, where a greater Evil cannot be removed without it. And,

3. If we may do any Evil to another, then we may alſo deſire and will it. It is unqueſtionable, a Man may will to do what he may do. And he may do Evil to another Man, where,

1. It is the likelieſt means to procure the Offender ſome greater Good, than by this he is depriv'd of. Or,

2. Where it is but conſiſtent with his Happineſs; if it be in order to the greater Good and Advantage of others, the Liberty and Security of other Men, the Publick Peace. This is the only Reaſon I can readily think of, why the Life of a Robber ſhould be taken away, that People may be ſecure and quiet in their Poſſeſſions, and encouraged to Labour and Induſtry to get, by their being protected by the Laws in keeping what they have; and alſo leſt the Contagion ſhould ſpread, and the Malefactor himſelf proceed to more Offences, and others receive the Infection from him. All which is more valuable than ſuch a Man's Life.

These are the *Principles* of *Justice*; and our Saviour came not to overturn any of these Foundations.

This then seems to be the Sense of our Saviour in this Precept. Not that we should *love* any thing that is *Evil* to us, and tends to our Ruine as such: Nor, that we should not endeavour and take the best and likeliest ways to free our selves from a bad Estate: Nor that we should not do and desire some Evil to Men who may be our *Enemies*, provided that it be in order to a greater Good, than it is a Deprivation of to themselves or others, and never inconsistent with their Happiness. But that we should desire and do as much as we can, all that *Good* to them who design and do the worst *Evils* to us, which can be consistent with our wisest Endeavours after their, our own and others greatest Good.

This seems to be all that is meant by this Precept. Only this Caution is necessary; that *Passion*, and Interest, and *Folly* must not determine in the case; but *Wisdom* and *Righteousness* must sit in Judgment, and decide what is, and what is not consistent with their, or other Mens greater Good.

II. Now let us consider the Reasonableness of such a Practice considered in it self; and the Arguments that are drawn from such a Consideration of it, as well as the more external that perswade to it.

1. Consider *Love* in it self. It is the most *pleasant* as well as the most beneficial and per-

perfective Operation of Man.

There is none but will confeſs himſelf beholden to this Paſſion, for the greateſt Delights he hath ever met with. It is that which makes us receive any thing of Pleaſure in our Enjoyments: Without it the beſt Condition would afford us no Content, and with it we ſhall have Satisfaction in the worſt. It is *Love* more than any other thing, that differences Mens Delights, Eſtates, Enjoyments, *&c.*

Our Delight conſiſts not in having abundance of Riches, nor in being honoured, nor in knowing much; but in our Love and value for theſe things. He that hath much, and loves not his Wealth, hath no more of pleaſure from his Riches, than he who is poor. Hence is it that the Neceſſitous hath more of Delight in his Condition, than the Wealthy-Man in his; becauſe he more loves and values his few Neceſſaries, than the other can his many Superfluities.

But I need no further Evidence of the Pleaſures of *Love* and *Good-will*, than an Appeal to every Mans Senſe and Obſervation of himſelf will give. The more he has of this, the better it is with him. If therefore it be extended as far as there is any thing that may be an Object of Love, how great muſt his Delight be? The moſt that we know of Heaven, which is a State of the greateſt Pleaſure and Delight that Humane Nature can have, is, that there is a conſtant and a great *Love*; and Hell, which is the greateſt Torment, is deſtitute of all Good-

will: *Love* and Kindneſs are baniſhed hence, and Spite, and Hatred, and Envy, take the place.

How beneficial this Temper is to Humane Nature, is very apparent. The Body it ſelf ſhares in the Advantages that come by it. In the Opinion of the French Philoſopher, as well as the Obſervation of many, it is literally *Health to the Navel*, and *Marrow to all the Bones*. It gives Warmth and Motion to the Blood, and new freſh Spirits to the whole Body: and on this account he thinks it more adviſeable to live in a miſtaken *Love*, than in *Hatred* that is true, and hath a Foundation.

But if this admit of Diſpute, yet that is unqueſtionable, that it is far better to love with Reaſon, than to hate without it; and that is all I plead for.

But theſe are the leaſt of the Advantages we have by *Love*: the greater are thoſe, which more immediately concern the *Soul*, and they are ſumm'd up in this, the knocking off the Shackles and Fetters, which Hatred, and Sorrow and Fear had bound up our Powers by; *Love*, that comes and mightily reſcues us from that Bondage and Thraldom: It ſets us at liberty, unties the Tongue of the Dumb, and unlooſes our Hands that were bound. It brings us back from the Solitude, whither Hatred or Fear had driven us, to a Converſe amongſt Men, and makes us active, and diſpoſes us to the Employment of all our Powers, which is neceſſary to their Perfection, and hath a great

tendency

tendency to it. That is the first, from the consideration of *Love* in General.

Secondly; Now consider it with its Object, *Enemies*.

1. They may do us much Good, and we are often the better for them.

(1.) That whereby they intend to ruin us, is often our Advancement; the Blow by which they would kill, cures us; so that the Sword becomes a Lancet; and the Enemy who designs to make Wounds, proves a Chirurgion and heals them.

Indeed this being besides their Intention, we perhaps shall not think they merit our *Love*, or Thanks the more; but however, they are Instruments of Good to us; and we should love that which is any cause of Good to us. *Joseph*, on this account, was not himself, nor would have his Brethren angry with themselves, because tho they intended him Evil, yet God did him good by it, and used them as Instruments thereof. We *love* things that cannot intend us any Good, if yet we receive any from them, such are all without Reason. Thus the Sword with which a Man hath defended himself, is of great value with him; and why should not we as well *love* them that do us Good against their Will, as those that do it without any Will at all? But,

(2.) We owe much to their evil Designs and mischievous Devices against us.

This makes us cautious and circumspect, and this Caution makes us wise. He considered this rightly, who when he would re-

pay every one what he had received from them, gave his *Prudence* to his *Enemies*. This Apprehenſion makes us more exact in what we do, than otherwiſe we ſhould be. We ſhall go upright, if we know there be thoſe that watch for our halting: We ſhall be more accurat in our Actions, where we are to receive our Doom from Enemies, than where Friends are to judg us. Friends are often ſo blinded with Paſſion, that they can ſee nothing that is amiſs; and Enemies are ſo envious, that they acknowledg nothing Good, but what is eminently ſo. This is therefore a Spur to make us do our beſt.

Many Men, if they had had fewer Friends, and more Enemies, had been much better than now they are: Therefore we muſt love them as we love Poiſons, that are mixt by the Phyſician ſo, as they are made ſoveraign Medicines, and cure our Diſeaſe. This is the firſt.

2. Tho *our Enemies* do Evil to us, yet there is Good in them; and for the ſake of that we muſt *love* them. *Wilt thou deſtroy the Righteous with the Wicked?* ſaid *Abraham* to God, *Far be it from thee.* It is the ſame Injuſtice, for any to hate and deſtroy the Good which is in any Man with the Evil, where a Separation can be made. God ſent his Angel to bring *Lot* out of *Sodom*; and in the Deluge, *Noah* was warned and ſaved in the *Ark*. We ſhould follow this Example; proſecute and deſtroy the Wickedneſs, the Evil of a Man; hate that with a perfect Hatred; but ſpare the Man, be kind

kind to our own Kindred, have regard to God's Creature and Image, *love* the Chriſtian.

Phyſicians do never cut off any part of the Body which is not ſo corrupted, that there is no hopes of a Cure, and where the reſt of the Body is not in danger by it, and the Part it ſelf not vital, not neceſſary to Life.

And in the Body Politick, the Relatives of an Offender are not involved in his Sufferings, where the Offence is not very great; nor there unleſs it can be ſuppoſed they were Partners with him; or it be neceſſary for the publick and greater Good, both to demonſtrate a great Severity againſt ſuch Crimes, and thereby to terrify Men, and alſo the more to engage all Relations to concern themſelves in one anothers well-doing.

Somewhat like this ſhould our Carriage be in the Caſe before us. Is there any hopes that the Evil may be removed from the *Life* and *Mind* of the Man, without his Ruine? Try if it may. And it is hard to ſay that a Man is, or can be ſo much our *Enemy*, that he will never be our *Friend*. We cannot affirm that the Caſe is deſperate, that he is unreconcileable. Surely no Man is ſo much a Devil, as to be implacable, this can never be. Beſides, there may ſometimes be a deal of Wiſdom and Goodneſs, which muſt be loved, and the Man valued for it.

Laſtly; We are never to do any Evil which will make it impoſſible for our Enemies to be happy: this would be to cut off

a vital Part. Such was his helliſh Malice, who perſwaded his Enemy to blaſpheme in hopes of Life, and then preſently ſtabb'd him, and then triumph'd in the greatneſs of the Miſchief. I never yet met with an Inſtance of one more a Devil. This Man had perfectly caſt off Humanity; and he hath done ſo too in great meaſure, who doth not ſo much deſire every other Man's Happineſs, as that he can do nothing, that is not in order to, at leaſt very conſiſtent with it.

As to the other Compariſon, let us not do that which the Soveraign Lord of Heaven and Earth ſo much diſowns, *puniſh the Fathers for the Tranſgreſſion of the Children.* Let every one *die for his own iniquity*: Find out the Criminal, let him ſuffer. Here's a diſorderly Paſſion founded on ſome eaſy and ordinary Miſtakes; remove theſe, but let the Man live: Let not him ſuffer, unleſs this be the beſt Method for the removal of this, and prevention of a worſe Evil that may befal him.

What I have now ſaid, ſignifies, that a ſpecial Care and due Regard ſhould be had to all that is good: and when our Anger and Diſpleaſure would inſtigate us to deviſe and do Miſchief to *our Enemy*, then conſider, he is a Man, that is, one who is liable to Error, but yet capable of Information: One who is ſubject to do Evil, but yet often is changed, and amends his Life: One of God's Creatures, and one of the moſt excellent of them; and ſhall we deſtroy that which we could not make, that which God himſelf

himſelf made, with ſo much Wiſdom, and ſuch greatneſs of Power? Can we have ſo little eſteem of the *Work of God?* Can we deſtroy what we do not underſtand?

Beſides; *Man* is *God's Image*, and all the Lines can never be ſo much obliterated, as that there ſhould be no reſemblance: And if there remain any Lineaments of our *Father's* Face in a Picture, we ſhall ſurely keep it as a ſacred Relique.

Will not this move us? Yet our own Likeneſs may. Can we love our ſelves, and not love our own Picture, that is ſo very like us? Or not love one, that is *Fleſh of our Fleſh, and Bone of our Bone?* So every Man is to another.

Or laſtly; Have we any *Love* to our *Saviour?* and ſhall not we *love* his *Diſciple?* Do we value our Religion, and have no more regard to the Profeſſors of it? Did Chriſt die for him, that he might live for ever? and will not you ſuffer him to live here?

Briefly; there is often a great deal of Good in him that is *our Enemy*; and we muſt love that, and him, for the ſake of that Good. We do not well to caſt away the Corn with the Chaff; nor the Garment, becauſe of one Spot; nor diſfigure the Face, becauſe of a Mole; nor pull out the other Eye, becauſe one is loſt already. And yet thus we do here, when we hate the Man, tho he be otherwiſe very good, becauſe he is our Enemy. But,

3. If

3. If there be very little that can be called good in him; if he be an Infidel, and fooliſh, and evil; if he not only be no Chriſtian, but hath alſo put off Humanity; if worſe than a Beaſt, if almoſt as bad as we imagine the Devil is: then the greater is his Miſery; and ſince he is capable of Recovery, the more compaſſionable is his Caſe.

The Man is miſerable, and therefore to be pitied: It is unnatural Cruelty, it is monſtrous Inhumanity, to hate, to proſecute one in Miſery. And this is the State of that Man whom I have here deſcribed; nay, it is in part true of every one that is my Enemy: For every Man is ſo far from *Happineſs*, as he is from *Love*, and Hatred is diſtant enough from that.

Beſides; He who continues in Spite and Malice againſt me, is an Enemy to God; and he that is ſo, is in the unhappieſt Condition imaginable: Why ſhould we add to his Miſery, which is already ſo great?

Thirdly; Conſider your ſelves, they are *your Enemies.*

1. It is no way proper for your ſelves to ſentence and puniſh in the caſe, becauſe you are ſo apt to miſtake every where, and eſpecially to be partial in your own cauſe. We are neither wiſe nor juſt enough to be Judges in ſuch a matter. We may be ſo far deceived, as to think them our Enemies who are not; and we oftner miſtake thus than we think we do: In this caſe to hate, is very evil in the opinion of all.

It

(It is ſuppoſed in the Text, that Men are *our Enemies*, yet we muſt *love them*: If they be not ſo, we are worſe than Heathens; and if they be, yet,

The Cauſe being our own, we cannot be thought competent Judges for our ſelves, againſt another Man. We are ſo apt to over-value every petty Intereſt of our own, as to think that all other Mens Concerns, how great and valuable ſoever, muſt give place to ours. We generally only conſider our own Affairs, and are wholly regardleſs of other Mens.

This is one Reaſon why all Controverſies betwixt Man and Man, are referr'd in all Countries to a third Perſon, who is more indifferent and impartial, and ſo will probably be more wiſe and juſt than a Party would be. Here alſo it cannot be proper for you, becauſe it belongs to God himſelf. *Vengeance is mine, and I will repay it, ſaith the Lord*, He only can underſtand the Crime, ſo as to proportion a Puniſhment to it.

Conſidering how apt we are to be over-paſſionate in our own Concerns, and to be too much exaſperated, where we are oppoſed in any little trifling Intereſt, we ſhould rather refer our ſelves to one that is perfectly wiſe and juſt, than paſs Sentence our ſelves againſt a Man, as we do if we hate him.

It becomes the Modeſty of one that knows himſelf apt to miſtake, to refer himſelf to the Judgment of another; and if we will be

be decided by him who is moſt fit to determine, that is, by God himſelf, then the Controverſy is ended, and we muſt not hate, but *love our Enemies.*

2. He is *our Enemy*, but a *Friend* perhaps to many others as good and better than we: and cannot we be ſatisfied with, and love that which is prejudicial to our particular Intereſt, if others receive Advantage by it? If the Rain that overflows me, make my Neighbour's Field fruitful, I muſt not diſlike it: And if the Sun warms thouſands by the Heat, which ſcorches me; or the Seaſon by which I ſuffer, favour many others; I am not to be diſpleaſed.

And if he that is mine Enemy, and oppoſes my Intereſt, be a Friend to many, I will love him, in as much as I am taught to regard other Mens Intereſts, and not only to *mind mine own Things.* He that only conſiders himſelf, and his own particular Advantage is his Center, may hate every thing that oppoſes him in it; but he that takes other Mens Concernments into his thoughts, and deſires their Welfare as his own, as every one doth, that is true either to Chriſtianity or Nature, will not be ſo much diſaffected to that which is againſt himſelf, if it be for others; but will love that which doth them good, tho it prejudice himſelf.

3dly; *Your Enemies*; Who have therefore known what it is to have Enemies, and have felt the evil Effects of Hatred and Uncharitableneſs: It is reaſonable to expect that

ſuch

ſuch ſhould not do that, which they know to be ſo great an Evil.

If it be no Evil to have Enemies, why do you complain? And if it be, why will you do thus? You ſee the Evil of it in others, why not in your ſelves? Will you condemn that in them, which you allow and practiſe?

Both Religion and Nature teach us to be affected towards other Men, as we are to our ſelves; to love our Neighbours as our ſelves; and to do to them, as we would have them do to us.

The Providence of God has given us ſuch Natures, and put us in ſuch Circumſtances in the World, that we have the greateſt Engagements laid upon us to mutual Kindneſs and Good-will. He has made us all of one Stock; we are alſo like one another; we ſtand in need of each others Help and Service: We make voluntary Agreements, and enter into Covenants and Contracts, by the Inſtitution of God, as well as by the Conſtitutions and Appointments of Men, to love and ſerve one another. *Love* is the Heart of Civil Society.

And beſides all this Proviſion, which Divine Wiſdom has made for our Exerciſe of Love; he has by the Goſpel taught it us, and obliged us to it in a moſt extraordinary manner: For, *Love your Enemies*; that is,

4thly; *Yours*, who were loved when you were *Enemies*, and had been miſerable if you had not. Rom. 5. 10. *When we were*

yet

yet Enemies, we were reconciled to God by the Death of his Son.

Here are three Particulars very conſiderable:

(1.) What kind of Enemies we were.

(2.) Who it was to whom we were Enemies, and who loved us.

(3.) With what kind of Love.

(1.) We were the moſt cauſeleſs and unreaſonable, the moſt diſingenuous and unworthy, the moſt weak and inconſiderable Enemies that could be. What Reaſon, or ſhadow of Reaſon will any Man bring for his Hatred againſt God? Why ſhould Man be angry with God? Or why ſhould he hate him, who is altogether Good, and can do no Evil? What could make him at odds with his Maker? or engage him in a quarrel with his Preſerver? This is wholly unaccountable. How baſe and ungrateful is Man, to oppoſe the Intereſt of God, who has done him ſo much Good? Doth he thus *requite his Love, his great Kindneſs?*

Laſtly; How little can he do againſt God? He is not, nor cannot be hurt by Mens Ingratitude and Rebellion: No; what we intended againſt Heaven, falls upon our own Heads. Such a kind of Enemies we were; and yet,

(2.) Our God and Saviour loved us. God who is infinitely wiſe, who depended not on us, who is our Example and Patern, and to be like him is our greateſt Perfection.

And leſt any ſhould ſay, Becauſe he depended not on us, and was ſo much above

us,

us, therefore he loved us: God in our Nature, the Man Jesus Christ, loved us; he who was like as we are in all things, except Sin. He that was so injured as never Man was, who received the greatest Indignities and Contumelies, and tasted the bittereſt Fruits of Malice; yet he *loved*, and *prayed for*, and *did good* to his worſt and cruelleſt *Enemies*.

(3.) God and Christ loved their Enemies with the greateſt and realleſt Love. *God ſo loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son*, &c. And our Saviour *laid down his Life*; and, *greater Love than this hath none*.

Now then we, who have ſeen ſuch Examples of Love, as are thoſe of the ever-bleſſed God and our Saviour, and who have received ſo much of Good by this Love to us, when we were Enemies; how can we not love our Enemies, who are in no degree ſo unreaſonable, or diſingenuous, or inconſiderable as we were to God?

5thly; *Yours*, who are *Chriſtians*, and therefore cannot be hurt by any Man, ſo as to be made miſerable. All that any Man can do againſt a Diſciple of Chriſt, is but little, ſo little, that it is not worth his earneſt Contention. Our Saviour bids us *not fear them that can kill the Body, and after that have no more that they can do*. And our Imagination repreſenting Evils much greater than we find them, if there be no reaſon to fear our Enemies, there can be none to hate them.

There

There is nothing more conducing, nor indeed essential to our Happiness, than *Love*. And therefore the Religion of Christ, which manifestly designs our greatest Happiness, has by all means secured the Practice of *Love*; it has removed all Obstacles out of the way, and enlarged its Bounds; discovering new Objects, that were not before thought of; extending it to Just and Unjust, Strangers and Acquaintance, Friends and *Enemies*.

6*thly*; This is the wisest Method we can take to be freed from the Evil we complain of. We shall hereby most probably,

1. Put an end to this Evil.

2. Prevent new ones to our selves and others. And if this be true, then there can be no Plea for Hatred.

This is the meaning of Hatred, to deliver our selves from some Evil, to destroy that. Now let us compare and see, whether Love be not a better and wiser Method to this, than Hatred.

1. It is more innocent, doth less harm to the Party himself or others, and destroys less Good.

2. It doth more ordinarily prevail upon Men to lay aside all malicious thoughts. And there are many Causes in Nature, which make it necessary so to do:

(1.) We are naturally prone to imitate; and here is a contrary Example set before us, a Patern of Love.

(2.) There is no Reason for any to hate one that loves him, because we only hate that

that which is evil to us; but if any Person love us, we cannot think he doth us evil, for he designs and will do us good: So that he who hates such an one, hates his own Good.

(3.) Ingenuity.

3. Returning Love for Hatred quencheth the Violence of it. The common opinion is, let the Sun shine upon the Kitchin-Fire, it will put it out. Love takes away the Fuel from those consuming Fires; it destroys both the Parents and the Nurse of Enmity, which are Hatred and Evil: These propagate and preserve, but Love and Goodness destroy and extirpate it. *Overcome Evil with Good*, saith the Apostle: that indeed is the likeliest way to overcome it.

Love by yielding overcomes: that, which by resistance increases its strength; as Wooll-packs damp the force of that Cannon-Bullet, which will make Breaches upon a Stone-Wall. Farther, let us consider,

1. Either we deserved to be opposed in this Interest, or we did not: If we did, why do we complain? If not, our Reward will be greater. Let us patiently bear Persecution, and the Revilings of Men: and *great* will be our Recompence that God will give us.

2. Our Enemy either doth well or ill in being so: if well, love; if ill, pity him. His Sin is worse to him, than our Suffering can be to us. If he do ill, do not follow his Example; if well, do not hate him.

3. This Practice will bring Religion into Repute, we ſhall *adorn our Profeſſion*, and ſhew that Chriſtianity can do ſomething ſingular, ſomewhat above other Religions; that they who have the Light of the Goſpel, exceed Heathens and Infidels in their Lives.

4. It is neceſſary to Salvation. Our Sins will not be pardoned to us, unleſs we pardon others. *If ye forgive not Men their Treſpaſſes, neither will your Heavenly Father forgive yours. Whatſoever ye would that others ſhould do to you, the ſame do ye to them.*

5. We condemn our ſelves if we do not. Our Prayers and our Lives claſh; We daily pray for Forgiveneſs from God, as we forgive others; and yet we do it not.

6. This is a firm Foundation of Peace. If this Principle obtained, there would be no Quarrels; for theſe cannot ariſe, except both Parties be agreed to be Enemies.

If all theſe Arguments be well conſidered, it will appear how little reaſon the Enemies of our Religion have to take any Advantage from this, as they account, unnatural Precept of our Saviour, to diſparage his whole Goſpel. I hope my Diſcourſe has ſhewn both how reaſonable and how natural it is; and that it has taken away all the Pretences, which weak and inconſiderate, or ill-natured Men have for their neglect of it. So that I have prevented my ſelf of what I propounded to do next, *viz.*

III. To

III. To ſhew the Falſeneſs of thoſe Objections which are offered againſt it. The moſt conſiderable, I think, are theſe:

Object. 1. It is unnatural to love one that does and intends us Miſchief.

Object. 2. It is neceſſary to hate for our own Defence and Preſervation.

Object. 3. Example doth encline us to it.

Object. 4. If we hate our Enemies, they will expect and be afraid of this, and ſo will be deterred from being our Enemies.

In Anſwer to the Firſt Objection;

1. I have ſhewn in my Explication, that we are not required to love any thing that is in it ſelf evil.

2. I have in my following Diſcourſe ſhewn, that this Evil may be a Cauſe of much Good unto us here, but eſpecially hereafter: Or if of no Good to us, yet there is ſo much Good to others, as may make our Love prevail above Hatred.

For the 2*d* Objection, I have made out, that Hatred is not the likelieſt Method to be rid of this Evil, or to prevent it for the future.

For the 3*d* Objection; I have ſhew'd that we muſt not follow Example *to do Evil.* It may become Apes and Children to be wholly determined by Example, and to imitate every thing they ſee; but it is very unwor-

thy of them who have the uſe of their Reaſon.

As for the fourth Objection, I anſwer;

1. This is no Method to remove or leſſen, but to continue and encreaſe their Hatred. It is commonly ſaid, *Men hate what they fear.* Theſe two differ very little: We hate all Evil, and fear that which is abſent; but *Love*, on the other hand, removes this Evil from the Mind; and therefore,

2. Tends to reform and mend the Offender himſelf: It is a means to free him from his Malice, which is not extinguiſhed, but rather inflamed by that which increaſeth his Fear: For, notwithſtanding that his Intention and Mind is as evil as before, Fear not at all abating his deſire of doing harm, but only cutting ſhort his Opportunity. And therefore,

3. It will (if it increaſe his Hatred, and leſſen his Opportunity) make him watch every little occaſion of doing the Miſchief he deſigns. And it is hard for us to keep ſuch a conſtant and ſtrict Watch, as to give no Advantage to one who ſeeks it.

If all theſe Reaſons which I have propoſed, prevail not with us to put in practice this Precept of *Loving our Enemies*; yet let the Authority of our Lord and Saviour perſuade us. *I ſay unto you:* I who practiſed thus my ſelf; I, whoſe you are, who have Right to you and all Men; I, who know what is good for you, better than you do your ſelves; *I ſay unto you, Love your Enemies.*

All

All the Inference I ſhall make is, That then we muſt love thoſe who are not our Enemies, and ſtill much more our Friends, and thoſe that love us. If we muſt love thoſe that intend and practiſe Evil againſt us, much more thoſe that deſire and do us Good. If he that loves not his Enemy, be ſhort of a Chriſtian; he who loves not his Friend, is worſe than an Infidel: and if he be ſo, then the Name of Chriſt will not ſave him. He that is a Pagan, tho he ſeem a Chriſtian, ſhall fall under the Condemnation of Unbelievers.

I conclude all, with reminding you of my Intention in this Diſcourſe, which was to ſerve the Deſigns of *Love*, by removing one of the greateſt Obſtacles of it out of the way. Let us all therefore be perſuaded to love univerſally; to be pleaſed with Good where-ever we ſee it, even in our *Enemies*; to procure it where-ever it is wanting, and there is any capacity of it. Let us be ſo wiſe, as to ſerve our ſelves and Religion of all the Conditions of Life which we are in, by making them ſerviceable to *Love* and *Good-will*, which aſſuredly is the beſt Life we can live; that which will make us moſt acceptable to God, moſt eaſy and delightful to our ſelves, and moſt uſeful and pleaſant to others; it is the beſt that Earth or Heaven is capable of.

God of his infinite Mercy grant unto us the true Spirit of Chriſt, that Spirit whoſe

Fruits are Love, and Joy, and Peace, Meekneſs, Long-ſuffering, Gentleneſs, Patience, Goodneſs, Faith, and Temperance; that no Law may be againſt us; that we may begin to live that Life here, which we hope to live hereafter, and which glorified Saints and Angels now live in the higheſt Heavens, yea, the Life which God himſelf lives, who is *Love* it ſelf, to whom be Honour, and Glory, and Praiſe, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

OF Calling no Man MASTER.

MATTH. 23. 8, 9, 10.

But be not ye called Rabbi; *for one is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are Brethren. And call no Man your Father upon Earth; for one is your Father which is in Heaven: Neither be ye called Masters; for one is your Master, even Christ.*

IT appears from his Discourse in this *Chapter*, that our Blessed Saviour had conceived a great and just Indignation against the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*. It was surely a great Anger, that moved the meekest Man upon Earth so freely and sharp-

ly to rebuke them. The Lamb of God here became a Lion: and he who was ordinarily a Man of Conſolations, is now turned into a Son of Thunder, denouncing Woes againſt them: which we cannot conſtrue as the Iſſue of a hot and haſty Temper; for our Saviour's whole Carriage, both to his own Diſciples (who were ſuch as would have ſufficiently exerciſed a great Patience) as well as to his deadly Enemies, argues his admirable Mildneſs; and that he it was in whom that Prophecy was fulfilled, that *he ſhould not cry, nor lift up, nor cauſe his Voice to be heard in the Streets. A bruiſed Reed he ſhould not break*, &c.

We may therefore conclude that there muſt be ſome juſt, and reaſonable, and great Cauſe of this great Indignation: and this we find was an Accumulation of great Wickedneſs in theſe Men, which received Aggravations,

1. From their Pretences to greater Sanctity than others.

2. From their having greater Opportunities of being better than others.

3. Becauſe they being many of them in in publick place, their Practice muſt have a bad Influence on their Followers. For they who pretend Holineſs, and are wicked; they who are wicked, tho they have great helps to be good; and by being wicked cauſe others to be ſo too, their Sin is exceeding ſinful.

The Particulars for which our Saviour taxes them, were principally theſe.

1. Their

1. Their great *Pride*. *They loved the uppermost Rooms at Feasts, and the chief Seats in the Synagogues, and Greetings in the Markets, and to be called of Men*, Rabbi, Rabbi, &c. And under that Title affected a greater Authority, then is competible to Men.

2. Their wretched *Covetousness*, which shewed it self in the Instances of *devouring Widows Houses*, of esteeming the *Gifts* and the *Gold* above the *Altar* and the *Temple*.

3. Their abominable *Hypocrisy*, which appeared in their *teaching others to do what themselves would not do*; in serving a carnal Interest by a Religious Carriage, *making long Prayers in pretence, and wearing broader Phylacteries*, that so under these Vizards they might pass more unsuspected, and have a better Opportunity to seize on their Prey. This further appeared in their *partial* Obedience, chusing to obey those Commands that were least considerable, but yet make the greatest appearance of an extraordinary Holiness, whilst they omitted the weightier and more necessary, but which have less of Pomp and Ostentation. They were much in external Washings and Purifications, neglecting to wash their Hearts from Wickedness: They *tithed Mint, and Anise, and Cummin*, in which they would seem to supererrogate, their Goodness transcending the too narrow Bounds of the Law, whilst they omitted *Faith and Judgment and Mercy*. They would *build the Sepulchres of the Prophets* whom their Fathers had slain, whilst themselves persecuted, and

at

at last murdered the greatest *Prophet* that ever the World had. Who could have believed, that they who pretended to such an honourable Esteem of the Dead, should have so little Affection for the Living?

The fairest account of this Carriage is this; *Nos mortales ea quæ perdidimus bona magni facimus, quæ habemus nihili;* But perhaps the truest is, *mortui non mordent.* The Prophets that were dead could not be Witnesses of their Wickedness, nor rebuke them otherwise than by their Writings, which themselves having both the keeping and the interpreting of, would be sure to make them speak nothing to their Disparagement.

But tho they could either conceal, or put a false gloss on the Writings of dead Men; yet they could not either silence our Saviour, or by any Arts of interpreting elude the sense of his Words: No, he would speak and tell them their Faults truly and plainly.

These and such like were those great Crimes in these Enemies of our Religion, which our Blessed *Saviour* so severely taxed, and threatned. Whereupon it might have been supposed that *his Disciples* had been out of danger of these *Evils*, that they would not have come near the place where their Pilot had set a Sea-mark. But, (not to go further back) whoso takes a view of the Christian *Church* (at least a great part of it in these *Western* Parts) as *Erasmus* hath represented it, he'll say, that *Pharisaism* then

then lived, and reigned as much as ever.

Our Saviour had not, it seems by all those terrible Denunciations affrighted this unchristian Temper out of the World; but it appeared rather to have gotten ground, and to have prevailed against the true Christian Spirit.

Now, as *Erasmus* complains, *the Disciples of Christ are more truly Pharisees, than the Pharisees themselves, and Christians are become more ceremonious than Jews.* How every where doth he tax this in the *Romish* Church, even in those that should have been Examples of good Works? And what Reformation hath since been made, let every Man judg, who doth not only judg of Things by Names, and of Men by Professions.

There hath indeed been a very great and good Change made, for which thousands of Souls must bless God: but that much of this *Leaven of the Pharisees* still remains, is too notorious; that this *Proteus*, who can change himself into any Shape or Colour, who is of all Sects and Professions, who can be *Pagan*, or *Jew*, or *Mahometan*, or *Christian*, *Papist* or *Protestant*, a Member of the Church of *Rome* or *Geneva*, *Scotland* or *England*, a *Teacher* or a *Learner*: That he is under these several Forms; that this *Pharisee* is to be found in the *Christian* Church as well as the *Jewish Synagogues*, that he is both of *Luther's* and *Bellarmine's* Persuasion, a Follower of *Calvin* and of *Arminius*. In brief, I know no Way, no Sect, but this Serpent insinuates it self amongst them.

That

That I be not mistaken, I understand by all this, what our Saviour plainly taxes, viz. a Spirit of *Pride* that affects, and arrogates undeserved *Titles*, and a *Power* which no Man can reasonably challenge; of *Covetousness*, or an Humour of monopolizing all the World; a *neglect* of the *greatest Commands*, with endeavours to make amends by a *Zeal* in the *lesser matters*. An exact Observance of Externals, with a Supine Omission of the Intrinsicks and Essentials of Religion; such are *Truth*, and *Justice*, *Love* to God and Men. This is what I understand by a *Pharisee*.

Whilst I am on this Argument I must insert this necessary Caution, that all I aim at, is to tax the Vices of some Men in our Church, not to disparage all.

Let none therefore take occasion from what I say, to wrest my Words, and think me an Enemy to the Church, who if I had been so, I should then have been silent, or flatter'd and said, *all is well*. Let none be so unreasonably suspicious of my honest Intentions, as to think me to be undermining, whilst I am really using the best Method I know to build and settle. That I take to be a free and plain censuring, a publick Notice-taking of those Sins that are done openly in the Face of the Sun: such we are guilty of, and these are the Disturbers of our Peace, these shake our Foundations: These are they that cause Earthquakes, and raise those Tempests that threaten our Subversion.

Whilst

Whilſt we pretend to inſtruct others who are groſly ignorant our ſelves, to exhort them to a diligent Obſervance of thoſe Commands which we neglect, and ſo pull down what we would ſeem to build: Whilſt we are frequently guilty of profane Swearing, Intemperance, and other Immoralities, we open other Mens Mouths, but ſtop our own: for we cannot condemn that in them, which we allow in our ſelves; nor can they approve that in us, which we have taught to condemn in them.

Whilſt we live in the neglect of God, are really without any Senſe of, or Love to him in our Minds, have not Faith and Hope in him: Whilſt we are void of true Love to Men, are ſo far from Charity, from Bounty and Kindneſs, that we are not Juſt: Whilſt we omit *Judgment, Mercy and Faith*, tho we be very punctual in all leſſer Obſervances, both of God's and the Churches Commands; we are no better than they who tithed *Mint, and Aniſe, and Cummin*, and *made long Prayers*.

And if we be ſuch, our Saviour threatens us, and Men not only threaten us, but our way too; by ſuch Practices a *good way is evil ſpoken of*.

Aſſuredly thoſe are the things that have given Men that Advantage againſt us, which elſe they could never have had; for, *Who ſhall harm us if we do well?* No certainly, if we lived in the Love of God and of all Men, in Humility and meekneſs, in Temperance, in Juſtice, and Truth, in Mercy and Goodneſs,

neſs, tho our Church-Conſtitutions were worſe than (in the Senſe of thoſe that think them bad) they are, yet they would be accounted very tolerable. And whilſt Men ſee them ſo well agreeing, ſo very conſiſtent with a good Life, ſurely they would not ſo eaſily ſeparate from us.

But when it is too too evident that Men do not grow better but worſe, notwithſtanding their Communion with us; others will be afraid of entring into that Communion. *Pagans* would be prone to think, that the *Cup of the Lord* is indeed a *Cup of Devils*; the *Circean* Cup, which turns Men into Swine. And ſuch as find fault with the Conſtitutions of our Church, will the ſame way conclude, that it is our *Croſs*, or *Surplice*, or *Kneeling*, or *Forms* of *Prayer*, that makes us ſo bad. Which Opinion cannot be confuted by any Argument ſo well, as by a good Life, this will do it effectually: When Men ſhall gather theſe good Fruits in abundance, they will think the Root and Tree good that bears them; when they ſee us that profeſs our ſelves *Sons* of the Church of *England*, Vertuous and truely Chriſtian, they will think the better of our Mother for our ſakes.

We all know it was (principally) Sincere Piety, and an excellent Vertue, which ſhone forth in the Lives of its firſt Profeſſors, that ſo much commended Chriſtianity, and made it ſo ſucceſsful in the World: and it muſt be the ſame good Life, that muſt gain Proſelites to our Church. If we, the Mem-

bers

bers of it, live badly; if Men shall be made worse by their Society with us, they will not fear, but desire *Excommunication*; they will join themselves to *Rome* or *Geneva*, and if they find no better Christians there neither, will betake themselves to a *Wilderness*, where amongst all the Beasts of the Forest, they will fear none so much, for they find none so bad, as this *Wolf* in a *Lambs Skin*.

To conclude this Digression (which nothing but Love and Faithfulness have put me upon); as we desire our Religion should thrive, the Name of our Saviour be glorious, Peace continue, our own Church be unshaken from its Foundations; as we would be in *Favour with God and Men*, let us lay aside Pride, Covetousness, Hypocrisy: Let us do the greater matters, and *not leave the lesser undone*: Then will Gainsayers be convinced that our Ceremonies are innocent, when our selves are so.

Vertue and Vice will make these ἀδιάφορα as well as others, good or bad. To the *pure* and good, *all things* of this nature are *so* too; but to the *ungodly* and wicked, as their *Mind and Consciences*, so all things else are *defiled*: What ever he meddles with, he pollutes.

It is Vertue that puts an Esteem upon Men, it makes their Countenances lovely, their Words to be remembred; it casts a Perfume on all that Men do or say, gives every Word and Action a rich Scent: This will make our so much distasted Habits and Gestures, that they shall not be contemned and derided, but reverenced and honoured.

This

This is the beſt way, the only Method I know to beget in Men a good Eſteem of our ſelves, and of our Way. Whoſoever neglects this, whilſt he pretends to be a Friend to the Church, he is an Enemy to Chriſt. And how many ſuch there are, who falſly arrogate to themſelves that honourable Name, of *Sons* of the Church of *England*, but are indeed Sons of *Belial*, who think to have their Vices as well as themſelves adopted; who look upon Conformity to the Commands of the Church, as making amends for their Diſobedience to Chriſt's; who put on our form as a Cloke of Maliciouſneſs.

Alas! How many ſuch *baſe Sons* as theſe is our *Mother* diſcredited with? On this account is *She* ſuſpected by many not to be the *Spouſe of Chriſt*. They conſider not, that *She* indeed owns none for her Children, whom ſhe cannot in Charity think to be the Children of God; nor any to be Members of her, who are not of Chriſt.

If any, for whom neither God, nor the Church intends the Bleſſing, ſhall get the Genuine Childrens Garments, and lie, feigning themſelves to be her Off-ſpring, when they are not, and ſo get a ſhare in the Inheritance by abuſing her Charity; Shall ſhe therefore be blamed? Why alas! like good old *Iſaac*, ſhe is impos'd upon; her own great Sincerity makes her think her Children have no more Guilt than her ſelf, and her mighty *Charity covers their Sins* from her.

Thus

Thus it may be for a time, but I hope ere long the Fathers in our Church will find out those amongst us, *who walk so as that they are Enemies, &c.* And when they have found them, will use that Severity which is meet for so gross Misdemeanours; as some of them have already in their Visitations declared they will. And may they prosper, who after the Example of our Blessed Saviour, *whip out of the Temple* all those *Money-Changers*, those Religious Merchants, whose Devotion is a Trade, their Church a Market-Place; those who buy and sell, who have turned the *House of Prayer into a Den of Thieves*, have made the Habitation of Holiness a place of Uncleanness. May they succeed in their opposition to all Vice, and prevail against it; and may they serve in the Advancement of the Kingdom, and Name of our Blessed Lord and Saviour.

I have now done with this Digression, for which I have only this to plead, that it came from a great Affection to, and a sincere Aim at our Churches Good.

To return then to Words of the Text, which intimate to us one fundamental Error of the *Pharisees*, on which much of their false Opinions, as well as bad Practice was built: It was this, They ascribed to Men more than their due, and to God less; they took too much from him, and gave too much to them; made God no God, by making Men Gods: this I think to be implied in the Text.

From hence it was, that they were so strict and zealous in observing the *Traditions* of Men, whilst they were careless of the *Commands* of God. They had expresly owned their *Rabbies* as *Fathers* and *Masters*, without any respect to a Superiour; and therefore concluded themselves under necessary Obedience to their Commands, and a Faith in their Opinions.

They had not so explicitly resigned up their Understanding and Will to God, whence he was not believed, or obeyed as they were; and therefore they were zealous to *tithe Mint, Anise, and Cummin*; but very indifferent to keep *Faith*, and *Judgment*, and *Mercy*. They had resolved their Faith into a very fallible Authority, and their Obedience to the Determinations of a Will subject to Misguidance, which for any Man to do universally, canot be without manifest Danger. For in this case the *Blind* [illegible] *the Blind*, and such our Saviour tells us the *Pharisees* were.

That this was their Miscarriage, appears from our Saviour's Exhortation to his Disciples, which plainly implies an Opposition to the Practice of the Pharisees.

He will not have his Disciples, as the Pharisees, to arrogate to themselves, or attribute to others, that which is God's peculiar, or is proper to himself, whom God has anointed, *viz.* To be Absolute over Men's Faith or Manners. He requires they should not challenge to themselves such a Sovereignty as admits of no Controul; such an Autho-

Authority, from whence no Appeal may be made, or which muſt not be contradicted. They muſt not take to themſelves, nor give to others, ſuch a Power whereby they or others ſhall be confined to the Opinions, no, nor univerſally held to the Words of any Man.

Our *Saviour* will not have his *Followers* to affect thoſe Titles which denote a Superiority that cannot belong to them, who are equal, who are Brethren, and have all one common Father; who are Fellow-Servants, and have one Lord and Maſter.

He doth not allow that any one Perſon, or any Company of Men ſhould take the Chair, and dictate; and all the reſt to be concluded and determined abſolutely, neceſſarily, by what they ſay.

That this is the meaning of theſe Words appears thus; Here our Heavenly Father, and our Bleſſed Saviour are owned as above all others, as Supream; and therefore the Name of *Father* and *Lord*, are moſt truly and properly given to them. There muſt be ſome reaſon why *God* is κατ' ἐξοχὴν, to be called *Father*, and *Chriſt*, *Maſter*: and I know none other account can be given of this Superiority and Preheminence above others, but this, that God is Abſolute, Supream Lord and Law-giver: Therefore what he ſaith muſt ſtand; if an Article of Faith, our Aſſent is concluded, if God propoſe it; and if a Precept of his, Obedience muſt be given. But this is the Prerogative of Heaven, no mere Man can challenge

Thus having declared what I take to be the true Senſe of the Words, it will be needleſs for me to add any more, to ſhew their Miſtake, who think from this place, that the uſe of theſe Words, *Maſter*, *Father*, &c. is forbidden. No ſurely, our Saviour did not condemn the Words, but as they carried a bad Signification, and did humour Mens Pride.

He was diſpleas'd that the *Phariſees* would, under theſe Titles, arrogate a Power that did not belong to them; and that they could be ſo hugely pleaſed with a Lie of their own making; that they could be delighted with the empty Titles of *Maſter* and *Doctor*, which themſelves had aſſumed.

And it is a ſufficient Argument, that he did not forbid the uſe of theſe Titles, becauſe himſelf allowed and uſed that of *Father* and *Mother*. And his Apoſtle St. *Paul* called himſelf a *Father* and a *Teacher* of the *Gentiles*; which we muſt think he would not have done, if he had underſtood our Saviour to have abſolutely forbid it; and ſurely he would have underſtood it, if it had been ſo.

Having ſaid what I think neceſſary for the Explication of theſe Words, I proceed in the next place to lay down thoſe Propoſitions which may be deduced from, and alſo thoſe that are more expreſly contained in the Words.

I. Chriſtians have a *Maſter* and a *Father*.

In

In the largeſt Notion wherein theſe Words are ſometimes taken, it is true of all Men in the World: for every Man living is dependent and ſubject, they may all make that Confeſſion: *It is he that has made us, and not we our ſelves; we are his People, and the Sheep of his Paſture.*

It is true alſo in that more reſtrained Senſe, wherein theſe Titles ſignify *inſtructing* and *teaching* (and thus I underſtand them here) for all Men will acknowledg ſome *Superiour*, who teaches them, and from whom they can make no *Appeal*.

That this is very natural to the Mind of every Man thus to think, will appear, if we conſider how generally the moſt part acquieſce in the Teſtimonies of Men: and it is almoſt neceſſary that both they and others ſhould do ſo, if we conſider the way we are all educated; for we take all our Words upon truſt from others, and we derive our Actions too from an Imitation of what we ſee them do. And whilſt we do thus, we acknowledg Superiours. And for them that are more wiſe, that perceive themſelves to ſtand upon pretty equal Ground with other Men, yet they find they are liable to be deceived, and therefore they make their laſt Appeal to the Veracity and Goodneſs of God. This made the Principle, from which they infer the Truth and Certainty of all the Knowledg they have.

There is no Man who conſiders himſelf, and his ways of working, but will acknowledg he is beholden to ſome other than

himself for his Understanding: but whether he will own it or no, there is a *Light that enlightens every Man that comes into the World*, from whence the *Candle of the Lord*, the *Spirit of a Man* derives its Light.

Every Man is conscious that himself was not the sole cause of his first Thoughts: indeed he knows not how he came by them; but this he probably thinks, there is some very wise knowing Mind that teaches his Ignorance by divers natural Impressions on him, as well as by some more secret Inspirations.

Whosoever will confess himself wholly beholden to another for his Soul, for his Faculty, and in particular for the Exercise of this Faculty, he plainly confesses a Superiour, one above him, and an Instructor also. And if he further shall acquiesce in the Judgment, which this Mind thus directed shall make, as certain; he saith in effect, that this Guide is infallible, and no Appeal to be made from him; which is the true Notion of the Word *Father*, &c. in this place.

Now every Man doth thus: upon several Motions he hath divers Thoughts suggested to him, which without demur, without all hesitancy he entertains and proceeds to observe; he doubts not of the Testimony which his Senses bring in, and proceeds forthwith to pass Judgment. All which supposes him to make no Appeal from that Cause that hath led him into these Thoughts, he acquiesces there. But for Christians, their very Name implies them to have a *Master*, one

one whom they believe and follow. A Christian is a Believer, and so every Scholar ought to be, and they profess themselves to be the *Scholars* of Christ.

If this be true of all Christians, that they have a *Master*, a *Father*, then none of them are to assume this Honour to themselves. They must carry themselves as *Fellow-Scholars*, as *Brethren*; that is, they must not propose their *own Doctrines*, (such as are properly their own) which they have not received from their *Master*, to be assented to as *infallible*: Indeed they must not propose them at all, so as to determine others; for in so doing they desert their Stations, forget they are but *Scholars*. If they will propound to others *that* which shall determine them, it must be their *Master's*, not their *own*; for otherwise they will not be so much *Præcones & Nuncii*, as *Inventores & Autores Dogmatum*.

They that demand Mens Assent to their Opinions, and Obedience to their Commands, which are *theirs*, and not their *Master's*, do by this make themselves *Masters*.

All they then fall under Censure, who are *Creed-Coiners*, or *Law-makers* in Christianity; who frame Creeds, and make Laws of their own, such as they had not from the *Father* of the Christian Church.

II. Christians have but one *Master*, but one *Father*.

Indeed if we ſuppoſe the Inſtitution rational, there can be no more than one, becauſe there can be but One *Infallible*, and we cannot imagine that the Chriſtians would ſet up any other, by whom they would be univerſally and abſolutely determined.

Tho there be many Names that have propoſed the Chriſtian Doctrine to us, and from whom we cannot appeal; yet all their Authority is derived from *One*, and it is by his Commiſſion that they have done it. They are his Heralds, and he hath authorized them. They propoſe his Doctrine, and not their own; his Articles and Canons: That they are ſo, we are aſſured, becauſe he bears them witneſs by Signs and Wonders, and many mighty Works. And that they are his, is further evident from this, that they are very agreeing with, and in purſuit of the Revelation which is undoubtedly his.

If thus, whence are thoſe diverſities of Names amongſt us? *I am of* Paul, *I of* Apollo, *a third of* Cephas: One is a *Pontifician*, another a *Lutheran*, a third a *Calviniſt*, a fourth an *Arminian*: Are any of theſe our *Fathers?* If they be not, why are we called by their *Names?*

Why ſhould any of theſe dividing *Names* be heard amongſt us? Are not we all the Children of one *Father*, the Diſciples of one *Maſter*, the Servants of one *Lord?* Are we not *Brethren?* why ſhould we then fall out? Are we not Fellow-Scholars of one and the ſame *Maſter?*

Yes,

Yes, it will be ſaid, we are ſo indeed, but we may differ about our *Maſter*'s Sence. *Plato* and *Ariſtotle* were both *Socrates*'s Scholars, but yet agreed not. We all own the ſame Maſter, but yet cannot agree in his Mind, in many both Articles of Faith, and Rules of Life.

This is granted, and yet the Expedient whereby Unity may be preſerved in the Church is not hard, if we come with peaceable Minds, if we indeed deſire it. Therefore in this caſe, if we can but ſuppoſe our ſelves fallible in interpreting, and grant our Brethren a liberty of judging; if we can think the Words capable of the Sence they give, or can but believe that they think them ſo, tho we do not; if the Sence they put upon them be not in it ſelf oppoſite to, and inconſiſtent with the Foundations of Faith, a *good Life*, the great Deſign of our Maſter, and only neceſſary to Salvation.

Or tho their Conſtruction be in its tendency deſtructive of a good Life, yet if it be not ſo in them; if notwithſtanding this difference in (perhaps) ſome obſcure and great Myſtery, they agree with us in all that is plain, and their Practice is ſuitable to the Rules of our Maſter; in this caſe I ſee no reaſon to diſown them, as no Chriſtians; and whilſt we own them as Chriſtians, we muſt love them as Brethren.

Perhaps their Underſtanding is ſhort of mine, (but perhaps alſo mine may be ſhort of theirs) ſhall I not therefore bear with them? Yes, as long as they hold the *Foundation*,

dation, tho they *build on it Wood, Hay, Stubble*, &c. they must not be rejected; for they shall be saved, tho it be as *by Fire*.

The great Apostle's Resolution in the like case should be ours: *If in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal this unto you.*

Here it may be objected;

Object. Doth not this abridg them of their liberty of thinking, and consequently hinder that Improvement which might be in a free Enquiry after Truth, which the Mind would make, that is not determined by the Dictates of others?

To this I answer;

1. That they do thus give up themselves absolutely to the determination of one, is agreeable to the best Reason. If there be One who is infallible, who neither can be deceived, nor deceive; it is most highly rational to resign up our selves, to believe and obey him. No Man can assent on better Evidence, or act on better Reason, than the determination of such an One, and such an One as he is, into whose Authority Christians have resolved their Faith and Obedience.

2. This no way prejudices, but rather advantages the true Use of our Reason; for it determines us to examine all Revelations that pretend an infallible Authority, whether they do not contradict those Principles which we know are infallible. This Course we are put upon, that we may secure our selves from Cheats; for if that which

which is proposed, contradict the Principles commonly received, and which all Men take as true, we have reason to suspect it, and must think, that our *Master* who taught us these, if he be wise and good, did not teach us this.

But then (because Principles commonly received may be doubted by some, and some granted by all perhaps may be false) if any *Doctrine* be proposed to be believed, which is impossible to be believed, that cannot come from him who is *Wise* and *Good*.

Now I account it impossible for a Man to assent to contradictory Propositions, whether the Contradiction be express or implicit; for it is all one to say, *A Man is reasonable, and not reasonable*, and, *A Man is a Stone*. They therefore that would bring in Contradictions into our Religion, and assert that there are Doctrines in it, which are not only above our Comprehension, but are plainly repugnant to the true Principles of Reason, as well as to themselves, they are a great Offence to Christianity, and lay a sure Foundation of Mens rejecting it; for they put them upon doing what they cannot do: I say, what they cannot, not only because of the Corruption and Weakness, but because of the Nature of our Faculties.

In this case a Man must either forsake his Religion, or his Reason: And I know not to what purpose any should keep his Religion, if he forsake his Reason; nor indeed do

do I see how he can do it, if his Religion be reasonable; and his Reason will signify little, if Contradictions may be true.

By all this I blame their Practice, who affix a Sence to the Scriptures, and to those Confessions of Faith, which the Church agrees should be publickly used, that is contradictious; and then to make the best of their Miscarriage, and keep their own Error in credit, will tell us we must believe Contradictions; when they may as well bid the Sun give forth darkness, or the Fire to wet, and the Water to burn.

For all this they pretend an Authority into which we are to resolve our Faith, not considering that they deny the Authority which they pretend: for can it be consistent with the Wisdom and Goodness of a Superior, to oblige his Subjects to Impossibles, to require them to do what is repugnant and destructive to their Natures?

Whosoever therefore have, under the Pretext of such an uncontroulable Authority, ventured so far in the Explication of the Mysteries of our Religion, that they have used such Words as in their most proper and usual Sense, imply manifest Contradictions, they have been no Friends to the Christian Faith. And whatsoever they say, the Christians *Father* will not dertermine his Sons to believe Contradictions. But I conclude this second Propofition with this practical Inference.

If

If Chriſtians have but one *Maſter*, one *Father*, then they muſt own his *Authority*; that is, believe his *Revelations*, obey his *Commands* without any doubt or diſpute: for his Authority is undeniable, his Will uncontroulable, no Appeal to be made from his Determination. Therefore aſſent without debate, obey without demur. If we have a *Father*, give him his *Honour*; and a *Maſter*, let him have his *Fear*.

III. *There is no Man upon Earth that is the Chriſtian's Father or Maſter:* None by whoſe Senſe he is to be abſolutely, neceſſarily determined. He needs not to reſolve his Obedience into any Mans or Mens Authority. Our Religion is ſo very excellent and wiſe, that it could not be of humane Original. Surely this *Tree of Life* never grew firſt in an Earthly *Paradiſe*, but was tranſplanted from ſome more excellent Soil, and ſet in this red Earth.

Beſides; if we conſider the Deſign of it, it is to prepare Men for the *Heavenly Life*, which it doth, by begetting in them ſuch Perſwaſions and Affections, and teaching them to act here, juſt as they do *there*. Therefore our Creed and Law muſt probably be a brief Tranſcript of ſome of theirs; and none can tell what theirs is, but he that made it, God. Religion, like Water, will not riſe higher than the Spring; if it derives its Origine from this Earth only, it will not riſe and raiſe us up with it to Heaven.

Bur

But if this be true, that we have no *Father* on Earth, how is it that we hear so much of an infallible *Judg*? either an old Man sitting in a Chair at *Rome*? Or else a *Synod* of Doctors, for the most part packed together by a Faction, and designed to drive on some Secular Interest? For, such have been many Councils, tho not all.

But what mean these Pretenders that they thus take upon them? Will they decide all our Controversies, end our Debates? An excellent Attempt! But will they do it indeed? Yes, effectually; and if any doubt of their Decrees, they shall be quickly convinced by a light burning Fire. They'l take care to keep those that are under them in Ignorance, they shall not have Knowledg enough to question their Determinations. Or, if any little Light do break through all the Curtains they have drawn, then they affright them with *Anathema's*; and if these will not do neither, they shall to the *Stake*.

How grievously the Christian World hath been abused by these Practices, is too notorious; whilst these false Fathers do not at all serve the Designs of Truth and Piety, but merely of their own Ambition and Covetousness.

Notwithstanding what I have said of those Conventions that are politickly and unwarrantably pack'd together by a Party, for the holding up of a Faction, and serving a carnal Interest; I would not be understood to detract in the least from a duly congregated *Synod* of wise and learned Men

their

their just *Authority*: which yet I must think doth not amount to that of a *Father* or *Rabbi*, as here explained. They are not absolute, cannot determine universally.

But have they no Power in determining? What is it? Tho this be an Argument fitter for a larger Discourse; yet to prevent Mistakes and Abuse of what I have said, I shall here speak somewhat of my Mind, in two or three Particulars.

1. They who cannot be supposed to have any better Reason than the Authority of a *Synod*, should be determined by them in matters both of Faith and Practice. That this may be the case of the Vulgar, I doubt not. Many are in the state of Children, who at first must take all on trust, and it is best for them in that State so to do, tho afterwards they may see how they have been imposed upon, and lay aside those infant-Prejudices: the common People first believe and obey, because a Company of wise and learned Men tell them, that what is proposed is true and good; but afterwards these Mens Reason may be more improved, they may have better Arguments to believe, and higher Motives to obey, than their Word; and may say as the *Samaritans*, we now believe, not because of your Words, but because we our selves see.

The ground of this first Position is, that Men are to be determined to assent or act by the best Arguments they can have. Now I suppose very many in so low a Condition, that this is the best they can meet with, *viz.* the

the Authority of a *Synod*; nay, many times the Determination of a ſingle Man. This is indeed a pitious Caſe, when in all matters of Good and Evil, true and falſe, a Man muſt relie on anothers Teſtimony: and yet it had not been ſo ſad, if Men that had Learning and Knowledg enough, had had more of Honeſty; but they have been ſo unfaithful to their Truſts, that they have very much impair'd their Credit with the World. I underſtand the Popiſh Councils eſpecially.

2. More improved Men, where the matter is diſputable, and ſomewhat equal, and unconcluding Arguments on both ſides appear, if a Synod interpoſe their Authority, I think, ſhould be determin'd by that; yet not ſo far as to exclude all after-Thoughts, they muſt leave room for them. For if their Reaſons againſt the Synod's Determinations ſhould prove concluding, and afterwards appear evidently ſo, they need not continue under that former Determination.

In this caſe a Man muſt compare his own beſt Arguments with that of the Teſtimony of thoſe Men; that is, he muſt conſider as well as he can, not only whether they be wiſer than himſelf, (which will be granted) but alſo whether they be honeſt.

3. That I may ſhew whither their Authotity cannot reach, I lay down this Poſition: That where the Synod ſhall determine that to be believed, which is, and appears repugnant to it ſelf, to granted Principles of Reaſon, or plain Scriptures; or where they ſhall enjoyn that to be done, which is, and appears

appears intrinſecally and eternally evil; or, which I can certainly conclude, is in thoſe Circumſtances evil, they are not to be believed or obeyed. Of this nature I underſtand *Tranſubſtantiation*, and worſhipping *Images*, &c.

What the Senſe of our Church is in this matter, appears by the 6th, 20th, 21ſt Articles. *The Scripture containeth all things neceſſary to Salvation; ſo that whatſoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any Man that it ſhould be believed as an Article of Faith, or be thought requiſite or neceſſary to Salvation.*

And in the 20th: *It is not lawful for the Church to ordain any thing contrary to God's Word written; neither may it ſo expound one place of Scripture, that it be repugnant to another. Wherefore the Church, tho it be a Witneſs and Keeper of Holy Writ, yet as it ought not to decree any thing againſt the ſame, ſo beſides the ſame ought it not to enforce any thing to be believed for neceſſity of Salvation.*

And for Councils: In the 21ſt after it is declared, *that they have erred, and may err*, it is concluded: *Wherefore things ordained by them as neceſſary to Salvation, have neither Strength nor Authority, unleſs it may be declared that they be taken out of Scripture.*

Whence is there ſuch an Inequality, that any ſhould undertake thus the Guidance of others? Were they born with more Wiſdom than their Brethren? Or have they had ſo much better Opportunities to get it?

Or, hath God extraordinarily conveyed to them? And doth he give them Commi on? Let them produce it: God's Comm on is a Power to work Miracles, which I ſee exerted in Atteſtation of a Doctr agreeable to Principles of Reaſon and Scr ture, then I will believe ſuch a Man to God's Inſtrument; I will yield up my to be determined by him in all Particul where I do not ſee a Contradiction to R ſon and Scripture.

4. God is the Chriſtians only Father, ſus Chriſt their only Maſter. *Grotius* tell that אב is a greater Title than רבי; therefore our Saviour takes the leſſer himſelf, and gives the greater to G This may paſs, if we only look at the *Chriſt Jeſus*; but under another Conſide tion, we know all Men are to *honour the S as they honour the Father.*

It was the great Promiſe and Propheſ concerning the Times of the *Meſſiah*, t they ſhould be *all taught of God.* Well the Chriſtians reſign themſelves to the D terminations of ſuch an Authority: th may be ſecure in the Guidance of an infin unerring Underſtanding; are in no dan of ſtraying where they have ſuch a Condu They may alſo ſit down quietly and reſt u der the Shadow of Divine Goodneſs, fear that the Maſter ſhould himſelf be m taken, for his Underſtanding is infinit nor yet deceive them, becauſe his Love is leſs.

If any ſhall ask, Where we are to expect thoſe *Decreta Patris*, thoſe Articles of Faith, and Rules of Life, which he hath given us?

I anſwer,

1. In the plain Principles of *Reaſon*, and the neceſſary Concluſions that flow from them: Such there are, from whence no Appeal can be made, of whoſe Truth we cannot doubt. Notwithſtanding all that the *Sceptick* can ſay, we need not be deceived in very many Caſes, and in ſome we cannot.

2. The *Revelations* made by Men, with whom God was in an extraordinary manner: Such were *Moſes* and the *Prophets*, and the *Apoſtles* of our *Lord*, but eſpecially the Bleſſed *Jeſus* himſelf, with whom God was preſent in a far more extraordinary manner, and ſo as he was with none other, for he was One with him. God in him aſſumed our Nature into Union with himſelf. *God was manifeſt in the Fleſh.*

When I ſay, God was with them, I mean that an extraordinary *Spirit of Wiſdom* and *Holineſs reſted* upon them, accompanied with a Power of working Miracles. Beſides; they were extraordinarily inſpired with a *Doctrine*, which they then delivered, and is now recorded in Scripture: Many of which were indeed immediately directed to others, and therefore concern us no further, than a Parity of Reaſon makes them: that part

of those Writings which most belong to us, is the Sayings of our Lord, and all the rest so far as is consistent with and agreeable to them.

The Inference that follows from this, is, That we would behave our selves toward our *Master* as it becomes us; that is, receive his Instructions, follow his Directions, be wholly resigned up to him, acquiesce in his Determinations, believe what he reports without dispute, obey what he commands without demur: Give full assent to the *Principles* of natural Reason, give a ready Obedience to the *Natural Law*. These were the first *Creeds* and *Commands* that ever were given. This was the *Faith once delivered to the Saints*, when there was yet no written Word; and these *Laws* were engraven in *the Heart*, before the *two Tables* of Stone were hewen.

Since God hath set out a large and fair Edition of these Articles and Canons in the *Scripture*; which are an Exposition of what was before imprinted in Man's Nature. The first Edition was in danger to be lost, and therefore our *good Master* made Provision for us in this second.

This is then our Duty to refer all to those *Teachings of God*, whose *Inspiration* gives *Understanding*; whose *Word* makes *wise the Simple*. If any therefore *speak, let him speak as the Oracles of God*; and let us, as the noble *Bereans*, judg by the *Scriptures* whether

ther the things they ſay *be ſo* or not. *To the Law and to the Teſtimony* (where we doubt): for, *if they ſpeak not according to this, it is becauſe they have no Morning in them.*

Before I conclude this Particular, I cannot but take notice of the excellent Condition of Chriſtians. See our *Liberty*, our *Nobleneſs*: both theſe appear in that we are not determin'd by any thing, but what appears to be *of God*: He is our only abſolute Soveraign. If any on Earth challenge a Power over us, it is only under God; and we are ſubject to them in and for him, and becauſe by being ſo, we obey him: And there is no Man living, whom we are bound to believe on his own Authority; he muſt produce his Reaſon, or cite his Text: Or, if he propoſe ſome new Doctrine, it muſt be conſiſtent with theſe, and he muſt work his Miracle.

If any Man therefore demand my Aſſent to his Doctrine, I may and muſt ask for his Authority: and if he have no more than his *ipſe dixit*, I muſt tell him, he is not my *Maſter*, nor any Man on Earth, but *One*, even *Chriſt*. Let us then ſcorn to live in Slavery to any Mans Opinions; but *ſtand faſt in the Liberty wherewith Chriſt hath made us free*. If we fail to do this, we are wanting to our ſelves, and our *Maſter* too, we loſe our Liberty, we are in manifeſt danger of erring, we give from him the Honour

that is due to him; he will be jealous of this piece as well as any other. Indeed it is as great as any; it is the Honour of his Wisdom and Goodneſs. Whoſoever fully acquieſces in any Man's Authority, and upon his ſingle Teſtimony ſuperpercedes further reaſoning, he aſcribes to him infallibility, and makes him a God.

And then how exceedingly doth Chriſtianity ennoble us? by which we are taught to conſider God in all we do, and own no Authority but his.

Laſtly; We muſt infer from this Precept of our Lord, that we ſhould not unduly aſſume or attribute Titles of Honour to our ſelves or others. That is,

1. We ſhould not over-earneſtly deſire thoſe that are deſerved and due. Nor,
2. Much leſs affect ſuch as are falſe, and above our Merit.

To do thus, proceeds from an Ambition, that ill becomes the Diſciples of him that was ſo exceeding lowly: who tho he was *Lord of all*, yet came here into the World, *not to be miniſtred unto, but to miniſter.*

If we much affect theſe Titles, tho deſerv'd, it is from a weak Underſtanding: But if we ſeek an Honour above our deſert (to omit other Conſiderations) we ſhall loſe that which we have: whilſt we catch

atch at these Shadows we shall lose what we are possess'd of.

Never was *Alexander* more below a Man, than when he affected to be a God. A Sword and Spear did get him more Renown than the Thunderbolts with which he vvas pictured. This vvas our first Parents Sin, to desire to be *as God*; let it not be ours. No, let us not rob God, but give him that which is his, and to Man vvhat belongs to him.

OF Inordinate Desire, OR COVETING.

ROM. 13. 9.

Thou shalt not covet.

HE who knows not, or is unconcern'd in the Unquietness, Disorder, Injustice, Violence, Fraud, that is amongst Men, hath either banish'd himself from their Society, or Pity from his own Breast. He that doth not see or hear those Tumults, and Confusions, and Complaints, with which the whole Earth is fill'd, either is not yet born, or is gone into the Land of Darkness, and dwells in the Regions of Silence amongst the Dead. And whoever is not hereby moved to pity, he either never had, or has lost the Nature of a Man.

I can ſuſpect no Man of ſo much Cruelty, as not to have his Heart relenting with Compaſſion: There is none ſure ſo far removed from theſe common Calamities, as not to bear a part of them himſelf; or if he be exempt, yet hath not put off Humanity ſo much, as not to ſympathize with others.

Ay, but that's fruitleſs Pity, which affords no help. The Tears which flow from a Compaſſion that brings no relief with it, are as the Showers which the Heavens pour upon the *Lybian* Sands, that, notwithſtanding them, continue ſtill barren. What ſhall be done to remove theſe Evils? Let us enquire into the Cauſe of, and the Means to remove them.

Indeed the Caſe is ſuch as may make us queſtion whether there be any Remedy. This Chronical Diſeaſe hath continued now ſome thouſands of Years, and no Cure hath been found: No; the great Phyſician, the Healer of all our Diſtempers, the Bleſſed *Jeſus* himſelf, hath not effected this Cure: For, I need not tell you, that the *Chriſtian World* hath been, and is more filled with Deceit and Force, Rapine and Tumult, Contention and Quarrel, than either the *Jewiſh*, *Mahumetan*, or *Pagan*.

Nor yet doth this redound to the diſparagement of our great *Deliverer*, becauſe his Preſcriptions are excellent, and his Medicines ſovereign and approved; but it ſhews either the Unskilfulneſs or Unfaithfulneſs of *thoſe* that are employed by him, or

or the Ignorance and Perverſeneſs of the *Patients*.

He hath diſcovered the Cauſes of our Diſtemper, and hath told us therefore what's to be done for prevention or recovery. The Holy Scripture in many places, and in theſe few Words of the Text, hath directed us to the *Root* of all the *Evils* that are amongſt us, *our own Inordinate Affections*, and hath counſel'd us to pluck *it* up, and we ſhall aſſuredly eat no more of thoſe bitter Fruits, that Gall and Wormwood which grow on it.

That *immoderate Deſires* and *lawleſs Appetites* are the Spring of all Injuſtice and Diſorder that is amongſt us, is notorious. Theſe are the Fountains which flow forth in the more violent Torrents and rapid Streams of Force, or in the crooked and more winding Meanders of Craft, which all concur to make an overflowing Deluge, that threatens to drown the World.

Whether we look back to the Times that are paſt, or take a view of the Age in which we live; whether we conſider our own Country, or the Lands that are more remote; we ſhall in all different Times and Places find the ſame Cauſe of all the Evils and Injuries that are amongſt Men. Our *over-eager Deſire* is the common and too fruitful Parent of all thoſe Miſchiefs; this is the Womb that bears, and theſe the Breaſts that give them ſuck.

Deſire is, and ever was the great *Incendiary* of the World, which kindles and fo-

ments

ments those unquenchable Flames, that waste and make desolate all Places.

Desire is the *Devil* that sows Discord amongst Brethren, that *goes about like a roaring Lion, seeking whom he may devour.* This was the Serpent that tempted Man to Discontent in Paradise; this made him soar too high, and make too bold and near Approaches to the Throne of Majesty, until his Wings melted, and he was plung'd and perished in the great Waters.

It was *Desire* that engaged the Giants of the old World in their War; which was the Builder of a *Babel* that threatned Heaven.

And if *Desire* can so far prevail with Man, as to make him wage War against God, it will unquestionably make him quarrel with those to whom he is less obliged, whom he can have more hopes to overcome, those of his own kind.

It's but reasonable now to expect that Princes should oppress, and People rebel; that Governors should become Tyrants, and Subjects refractory; that *Jezebel* should murder poor *Naboth* for his Vineyard, and *Jehu* seventy Princes for a Throne; that Masters should be rigorous in exacting what they ought not, and Servants perverse in not obeying where they ought; that Parents should be cruel to their Children, and they again unnatural to their Parents.

If *Desire* could *break* those *Bonds*, and *cast away* those *Cords* with which God hath tied us, it will not be held by Man's. If God

God himself hath not set Bounds to this raging Sea, how shall Man? If these *Waters of Strife* scale Heaven in black and dark Clouds, they will fall down upon the Earth in Rains and Tempests; and so they have, and have covered it with a Flood more destructive than *Noah*'s: For that drowned the World but once, this alway: In the time of that the *Righteous were saved from perishing by an Ark*; but now the Ark the *Church* leaks, and lets in these *Waters of Contention* so fast, that the pure and harmless *Doves* are even forc'd out of it, to seek a dry and resting-Place.

In that Ark Men and Beasts could live in quietness; in this, Men are less sociable, more savage than Brutes.

And whence are all these *Quarrels?* Surely they have the same rise that all others have; and that, St. *James* tells us, is, *our Lusts that war in our Members.*

They whose *Lips* should preserve *Knowledg*, who should speak as the *Oracles of God*, they make Merchandize of his Word, and regard not so much the Truth, as the Gainfulness of their Doctrine; nor how much the Souls of their People, but how much their own Estates are better'd.

Assuredly from hence it is, that they who minister in Holy Things, and *serve at the Altar*, are not content to *live of the Altar*; that the Mitre affects to outshine the Crown; that Priests covet the Power and Wealth of Princes, and a Superiority over them; that the Church seeks to outvie the Splendor of the Court. This

This is it that broaches the Doctrine of Indulgences for Sins to come, of Masses for the Dead, and the like: which whosoever considers in their tendencies, I doubt not but they'll be satisfied it's the Interest of Money, not of Goodness, that is carried on by the Asserters of those Opinions; that they serve *Mammon*, and their Religion is *Covetousness*.

This Inordinacy of Desire turns Apostles into *Judas*'s, Pastors into Robbers, the *House of Prayer* into a *Den of Thieves*; and it doth as easily transform the Flocks of Sheep into Herds of Wolves: For, notwithstanding the Sheep's Coat and Shape, if there be a ravening *Appetite*, an unsatisfied *Desire*, 'tis a Wolf, tho it seem a Sheep, a *Wolf in Sheeps cloathing*.

Nor can it be expected it should be otherwise; but if the Sea hath overflown its high Banks, the lower Marshes must needs be drowned; and if the Physician be seized with this Disease, the unskilful Patient must be so much more. If the *Spiritual Men*, whose *Converse is in Heaven*, yet be so much within the Influences of this Earth; the *Laity*, they whose Employment is in it, must be more under the power of them. If the Light of the Heavenly Bodies be obscured by terrestrial Vapors; then the Candle which is in the Earth, must be put out by its Damps. And if the Disciples of *Jesus* be under the Power of Desire, it's not to be imagin'd, that *Moses*'s Scholars, or the Followers of *Mahomet*, or the Worshippers of many

many Gods, should be free from its Dominion.

We'll therefore take it for granted, that if Christendom be not exempt from this Tyranny of Desire, the rest of the World is not: If the Gospel hath not rectified Mens Affections, neither the Pentateuch, nor the Alcoran, nor the Traditions of the Gentiles, have or can do it.

Thus we see, that Desire hath an Empire further extended than ever they had, who would be call'd Lords of the World. We'll next consider how this Catholick King, this universal Bishop, this proud *Sultan*, this great *Cham* manages his Affairs.

And we may observe that this *Usurper*, who hath dethroned Reason, the lawful Sovereign of the World, and hath assumed his Scepter, does use the same evil Arts which all others do. Where he hopes to gain the Affections of his Subjects, he practises Flattery, gratifies them tho to their Ruine; and pleases, tho in that he undoes them. Where they will not love, they shall fear; and if he cannot court them by Flatteries, he will rule them as a Tyrant; and in both ways his Government is arbitrary and irregular.

Either Laws are never made, or never kept in his Dominions. That which is commanded is for the most part evil, or impossible, no Reason to be given of it besides *Will*. And tho it were not, yet sooner might the free Air be hedged in, or the Winds chained up, than the Subjects of this Prince,

Prince, who are Sons of Appetite, be restrained.

Nor can they be turned from their Purpose, unless by a Passion accompanied with more Power than they have. As the Stream of a great River cannot be turned from its Course, except it be met by the fiercer Tide.

The calm and quiet Decisions of Controversies, that used to be in Courts of Judicature, where Reason ruled, are either wholly laid aside, or strangely degenerate; and so either to bad purpose, or to none at all.

Here the Clients do not consider *Justice*, but *Interest*; neither do they regard Right or Title, if they can make the least Pretence, and therefore will desire in their Advocates not Law, but Oratory and Sophistry.

They will also suborn Witnesses that shall swear for Hire, not for Truth, and will corrupt their Judges to pervert the Sense of the Law; and under colour of Justice, to be unjust.

In these Courts the richest Client hath most Right, and the best Purse carries the Cause.

Or, if this will not do, they try another. If they either want Craft or Money, they will fly to Power; if they cannot out-wit their Neighbours, they will try to outmaster them; if the Court and the Law will not give it for them, they'll see what the Camp and Army will.

And

And now the Armour is put on, the Sword girded on the Thigh, and the Trumpet sounds to Battel, the Guns begin to thunder and lighten, thousands are murdered, Cities burnt, whole Countries laid waste.

Or, if this fail too, and be found insufficient to execute the Commands of inordinate Desire, the Souldier then will turn a Religionist; and he that wore a Vizard of Justice, will put on a *Form of Godliness*, will perswade People to gaze into Heaven, whilst he picks their Pockets; and will tell them, they cannot make sure of an Inheritance there, unless they part with their Possessions here; falsifying the Gospel now, as he did the Law before; and wresting our Saviour's plain Words to the enriching himself, and impoverishing his Brother.

Thus I have given a brief Representation of the State where *Desire* rules, by which *Fiction* we may a little guess at the *Truth* of Things, and how they are, and have been, and are likely to be in the World, because of *Covetousness*.

Assuredly this was it that made the *Grecians* and *Romans* in former days, and the *Turks* in these later, to make so great a part of Mankind their Tributaries. This hath made Men seek after new Worlds, as if the old were too little to bound their Desires.

This took away the Land, and Liberties, and Lives too of many thousand *Americans*.

ricans. This made the *Goths* and *Vandals* invade *Italy*; the *Moors*, *Spain*; and the *Danes* and *Saxons* (to mention no other) *England*.

But need we go to Histories and past Times, for proof of the evil Effects of *Desire*? No surely; our own Observation, and the Days we live in, will give us too many. Nor will I rake into the Ashes, where lie hid the Sparks of Contention that kindled our late Wars; no, let them be buried in eternal Oblivion. Nor do I care to uncover the Graves of the Dead; let their Dust rest in Peace for me. Nor will I discourse of the Actions of our Governors, where we are for the most part unable to understand, and therefore incompetent to judg whether they proceed from Desire or Understanding; for so I should speak rashly, and perhaps falsely too, of my Rulers. Let us therefore consider the Mischief *Desire* doth amongst our selves, and so we shall keep within the compass of our Knowledg.

(What Havock doth it make, whilst the Poor envy their rich Neighbours, and they again grind the Faces of the Poor? While they that have much, grasp at all, and would leave their Brethren Possessors of nothing; and in this Sence seem to construe our Saviour's Words, *To him that hath shall be given; and from him that hath not* that hath little, that makes no Increase *shall be taken what he hath.*)

But I need not insist on the Oppression, Force, Extortion, Over-reaching, that is among

mongſt us, which is the Iſſue of unlawful ſire. They whoſe Employment lies in ourts of Judicature, have, I fear, too reat evidence of this, and diſcern that it rather Cunning than Ignorance, and a ire of doing, not a fear of ſuffering In- , that brings ſo many Cauſes before em.

All they, whoſe Work is to end Debates, make Peace, (and that's the Work of awyers, and Miniſters, and every good an) all theſe can ſufficiently witneſs, what reaker of the Peace, and an Enemy to Society and Order, Deſire is.

And if this Evidence which hath been ght in, be full, what remains but that grand Malefactor, this Cheat, this Rob- , this Murderer, this Traytor, ſhould ceive his Sentence; or rather that Sen- ce which hath been given againſt him ng ſince by the *Judg of all the World*, ſhould be executed? For, he hath bid us or kill our earthly *Affections*; and e Words of my Text, hath comman- us not to *deſire*; hath made it every Duty; he ſpeaks indeed to one, but nds all; and therefore ſpeaks to one, all may the more regard him: As if had ſaid, Thou, whoever thou art, owneſt God for thy Sovereign, and Law for the meaſure of thy Duty, this y Charge, not to deſire, or *covet*, as we nder it.

Object. That, may some think, is a *hard saying*; Doth God oblige us to impossibilities? Or, how can he require this of us, who made it natural to us to desire? Is he fallen out with himself, or displeased with the works of his own Hands? Doth he first give us a faculty, and then forbid us to use it? Or, is Christianity a piece of Stoicism? Doth our Religion teach us to maim our Natures? to cease to be Men? Doth it instruct us unto Apathy? Is this the perfection it points and leads to.

Answer. Far be it from us to suffer such a blemish as this to lie on our Profession; let none have such an unworthy thought of our *Religion*, as if it should be at variance with *Nature*, as if the *Disciple* of *Jesus* could not be a *Son* of *Man*! For surely, never any Religion in the World did so be-friend, nor was so perfective of Humane Nature as ours. And 'tis only a mistake of the true meaning of these Words, that can make any to think otherwise. For they do not (as they seem) forbid all *Desire*, but only that which is *Evil* and *Unreasonable*, of that which we either have not, or cannot have a Right to.

This appears, because the word in the Original is *mediæ significationis* in all Writings; and may indifferently signifie good or ill, and in Scripture seems generally to be taken in the worser part: and so our Interpreters usually render it by *Concupiscence* or *Coveting*, which words we now generally understand in an ill sence.

Besides,

Beſides; theſe words refer to the tenth *Command* of the *Decalogue* (and that ſpeaks of other Mens Goods) they are an Abridgment of it; and yet, becauſe the object of the Deſire is not expreſſed, may give us the liberty of a larger Diſcourſe, than if we only confined our ſelves to ſpeak of deſiring what is another Man's. And I ſhall accordingly,

I. Diſcourſe briefly and in general, what may, and what may not be deſired, what Deſires are approved or forbidden. And then more particularly,

II. How far the deſires of another Man's Goods are prohibited. And here it will be requiſite to diſcourſe what that is which gives *Propriety*, and makes any thing to be a Man's Peculiar.

III. I ſhall offer ſome Conſiderations, which both by perſwading and directing, may aſſiſt us in the reſtraining all unreaſonable and unjuſt Deſires.

1. Concerning *Deſires* in general: I will not go about to prove, but will ſuppoſe that all are not evil, but that ſome are lawful, nay and good too; that ſome may and ſhould be, are not only matters of our Liberty, but Duty.

This is Evident to him that conſiders that they are natural to us, and therefore neceſſary; that Humane nature cannot in this

Estate be without them. Also that many of our Duties towards God, our selves, and the Publick, cannot be performed without Desire; such are Prayer, and Hope, and Submission to the Divine Will, and exercising our selves in seeking after such a condition, as may be best both for us and others.

These and the like Considerations may serve to convince those, that question whether they may have any desires at all.

This then supposed, we will now consider of what sort they are, which may and must be had.

1. Therefore all Men may, and ought to desire what is and appears to be good for them, and they have not.

But yet here are three Cautions to be attended to, which indeed are all implied in this Rule, but deserve to be more expressly taken notice of.

1*st*. That the Good we desire be possible.

2*dly*. That that which is good for our selves, be also good, at least no detriment, to the Publick. And

3*dly*. That it be not prejudicial (however not near so much as the want of it would be to us and the publick) to any other Man.

Our *Desires* should not be extended beyond what is good to us, nor can they beyond that which seems so: If that seem good which is not, the fault is in our Understanding, not in our Affection; our Guide hath made us to wander.

Again; if there be good which yet appears

pears not, here also we are to blame our understanding now for not informing us at all, as before for misinforming. Our Spy before gave us Intelligence that our Friends were coming, and they proved Enemies; and now that our friends are indeed near, we have no notice.

All this while I suppose, that the thing we desire we want, and we want only that which we can use: So that, if we either have it, or do not want it, neither should we desire it. Such Desires are superfluous and vain, and engage us in a needless labour. And the cause of all this is our Ignorance of what we have or want.

This Rule, as I said, doth imply,

1. That the thing we want and seek, is *Possible*: for that cannot be *good* for us, that cannot be; nor can we stand in need of impossibilities; nor can we desire what appears to be such.

But this is not all what I understand by this word *Possible*, *viz.* all that is not a contradiction absolutely; but that which is not repugnant on supposition of such and such an order of things. And thus we generally observe, God himself doth not do all, that absolutely implies no contradiction to be done; but he doth all that is consistent with such Beings and Natures, such a Constitution as he hath ordained, which was the best that could be.

And this well considered, would be sufficient to free us from either suspicions of inflexible Fate, or from unworthy and hard

thoughts of God: we should not tax him for want of Goodness, because he doth not all that's absolutely possible, since he doth all that in such a constitution (which is the best that can be thought on) can be done. But to return to my Argument.

If the great God (to whom nothing is hard, yet) do not will to effect all that, which implies no contradiction to be done; much less should Man let his Desires run parallel with Possibility: nor can it be congruous for him, whose Power is limited, to have an unlimited Will, a Will that's only bounded by contradictions, an affection commensurate to the greatest Power.

This surely was the *Stoicks* sense, when they would not have us to extend our desires beyond the τὰ ἐφ ἡμῖν, things in our Power. And if they intend this, that where we can do nothing by it in order to the obtaining the thing we wish, there we should cease to desire; I am of the same mind.

But if they intend, that we should be unconcerned in all that is not wholly and solely in our Power, I think they leave us little or nothing to be employed in: for, our very Acts, which we are said to be Lords of, seem most, if not all, partly to depend on other causes besides our selves.

There is thus much of Truth in their Precept, that we should have the greatest affection to those matters, where, if we engage our own Power, we may reasonably expect the Concurrence of all other Causes, that are necessary to effect it. And it will

be

be our Wisdom, if we would avoid the Torment of Disappointment, only to desire that, which in such an order of Causes, not only can, but probably will be produced; and on whose production that Desire may have some Influence. This is the first Caution, that the thing we desire be *Possible*. The *2d*, is That it be for *Common-Good*, at least not to the prejudice of the *Publick*. And this is also sufficiently intimated in the Rule it self: For, if any thing be really advantageous to a Man's *Private* Interest, it must be also to the *Publick*; and if it be not this, it cannot be the other. He that sinks the Ship, endangers his own Life; nor shall any one Member of the Body better its condition, by drawing to it self the Nourishment which should be dispens'd to all. No, if all the other Members suffer, that one must suffer too.

Man is a Member of the Body *Politick*, a part of *Society*; and if it do not go well with the *Polity* in general, it must go ill with *him* in particular. As therefore we should not, for the safety of one Member, destroy the Body; so it would be equally unreasonable for a Private Interest to undo the Publick.

And besides this consideration of every private persons reference to the Community, as he is a part of it, if we further look on him as a Lover of Good, and can but suppose him to prefer the greater before the less, and to think that that which is beneficial to many, is better than that which is so

to

to one, or to a few; he cannot (if these be his Thoughts) desire his own particular Interest may be promoted with Disadvantage to the Publick. That's the second.

3. As our *Desires* must be harmless, as to the *Publick*, so likewise to every *other Man*. For there can be no Reason why I should pull down his House, that I may build one for my self upon its Ruins; why I should endanger his Life to save my own: for he is naturally of equal value with my self; and if he be not so well improved as I, perhaps neither may he deserve much Blame, nor I Praise for this, but it may be the Circumstances into which we fell, were the chief cause of this Difference: Perhaps if he had been in mine, he might have been better than I; and if I had been in his, I might have been worse than he. But be it otherwise, our present Inequality doth not argue however, that he hath forfeited the Right he had; or if he hath, yet not to me.

This then must be remembred, that my *Desires* be innocent. I may be as *wise as a Serpent* for my self; but then I must be as *innocent as the Dove* to others.

Nor yet do I deny, but my *Desires* may extend to those things which may a little inconvenience my Neighbour, provided that Inconvenience bear no Proportion to the Loss I should sustain by the want of what I desire. It seems not unreasonable that he should be debarr'd of the Pleasure of his *Prospect*, rather than I want a House to dwell in.

Thus

Thus all the Members of the Body will ſuffer a little, rather than one ſhould periſh; and many will rather put their Shoulders to the Burden, than one ſhould be oppreſſed with it.

This is the third and laſt Particular to be conſidered for the regulating our *Deſires*, which I ſhall further diſcourſe of in the ſecond part of the propoſed Method.

II. How far the *Deſires* of what belongs to another are forbidden. Where I ſhall conſider,

Firſt; What is that which gives *Title*, and makes any Poſſeſſion *proper* to a Man. And,

Secondly; In what caſe ſuch *Properties* may, or may not be deſired by Another.

Firſt; That Men have *Properties*, that ſome have *Right* where others have none, we ſuppoſe, and the *Scripture* allows it in the 10th *Commandment*, and in other places, where *buying* and *ſelling* is ſpoken of; or indeed where *Charity*, and *lending* to him that would borrow, or giving *Alms* is commanded: For no Man can lend or give what's not his *own*; if there were no *Property*, any Man might take without anothers leave.

This then ſuppoſed, we'll conſider the *Foundation* of this, and that we may in general conclude is the *Law*; by this underſtanding

ſtanding both the Law of Nature, and of Nations, and the Municipal.

The Municipal Laws are very various, according as the Condition and Temper of the People, and Guſtom of the Place, and ſuch other Circumſtances inclined the Wiſdom of the Governours to make them. And that they have very variouſly determined of Proprieties, and the ways of acquiring juſt Title, is known to them, who have but looked into the Laws of ſeveral People, as of the *Jews*, *Athenians*, *Spartans*, *Romans*, &c.

Thoſe ways which obtain amongſt us, and have been generally received (if we abſtract from the Particular Modes and Determinations of them) are theſe; *Inheritance*, *Gift*, *Contract*, and *Ceſſion*: The reſt are ſufficiently known.

I forbear to ſpeak any thing of the Particularities which are obſerved amongſt us in *giving* or *buying*, or the reſt, becauſe it would be needleſs to do it at this time. Only this I add, That there being ſeveral wiſe unintereſted Men made Judges in theſe Caſes when they come in debate, and they have the Law reported to them on both ſides by the Advocates; and in caſe of Defect in the Law, or Failure in Judgment, there are Courts of Equity for the ſupply of ſuch Shortneſs, or Redreſs of ſuch Wrongs: Things being thus, nothing can be imagined better, nor a more commodious Settlement invented.

This

This I have ſaid, that we may acquieſce in our own excellent *Conſtitutions*; and be ſatisfied that he to whom our Law gives Right, hath a good and undoubted Title; eſpecially ſince our Law is ſo agreeable to, and founded on both the Law of Nations and Nature. Thus much concerning the Municipal Laws.

As for the *Jus Gentium*, Civilians tell us, that *ex hoc Jure diſtincta ſunt Dominia, Commercia, & Obligationes inſtituta.* From hence it is that Pacts are obſerved, which it's generally ſuppoſed were made at the firſt Diviſion, and that amongſt others, is thought to have been univerſally conſented to, that the firſt Poſſeſſor ſhould be accounted the rightful Owner. *Cenſeri debet inter omnes convenisſe, ut quod quiſque occupaſſet, id proprium haberet.* That Right which is obtained by Victory, ſuppoſes a *juſt War*; and that the Party who had the Title, has forfeited it; and that he, who contends with him, has Right to take that Forfeiture.

Thus far Writers ordinarily go in their Account of this matter; and here for the moſt part they ſtay. And it is ſufficient to put a ſtop to the Enquiries of the greateſt part, that the Covenants and Conſent of the Ancient, of their fore-Fathers, as alſo the Laws and Cuſtoms of the Places where they live, have determin'd, that there ſhall be Property, and what ſhall be ſo accounted.

Few Men are capable of higher Reaſons than Law and long Cuſtom, but ſome are, and ſome that are not, yet think they are; and

and both these will be enquiring into the rise of such Customs, the Reasons of such Laws, the Cause of so universal a Consent.

And this may also make it necessary for us to search into the very first Foundations of these Municipal Laws, and those *Jura Gentium*, which both have given Man a Right to *Propriety*; because there is a Generation of Levellers, who pretend that all this is without Reason, and that they have the Law of Nature on their side for a Community.

This we shall briefly consider: But as for that which they alledg from Scripture, I do not think it worth mentioning; it is so palpable a mistake to think, that one particular Example of the Primitive Christians can be obligatory to all Persons, in all Places and Times whatsoever. And the Arguments from the great Love that Christians owe to each other, are of no force, unless they first prove it *best*, that there should be no *Propriety*.

And as the Law of Christ doth not favour that Opinion, so nor the Law of Nature; which will appear, if we can discover that the first Foundations of these Laws, Customs, and Pacts, that settle Proprieties, are laid in Man's Nature, and in the Nature of the things which he uses and converses with.

And this will be very evident to him who considers, that all Men have *use* and *need* of several things in Life; that they are of different *Tempers*, and some more inclined to

make

make use of one sort of things, others of another: that one Man cannot be in all places, nor all Men in one; that all places will not bring forth all things; that several things which are useful to Man, may receive increase, and consequently Man's Condition be better'd by his Diligence and good Husbandry; and again, through his Unskilfulness, and Neglect, and ill Management, their number may be lessened.

Thus the wise Governour of the World hath ordered it for the Punishment of Man's Sloth, and the Reward of his Industry.

Add to this, That Men are not of very unequal Powers, but ordinarily one useth himself, and manageth his Affairs as well as another; and that it's very needful that all things should be put to their best use; and that Peace and Quiet should be preserved in humane Society.

We have enumerated sufficient Causes of *Division* and *Propriety*, so that we need not either tax God, as if he had too much stinted Man, and not made a plentiful Provision for him, and so necessitated Men to scramble and to catch that catch can. Nor yet should we have recourse to Mens Vice and Fault in this case, nor attribute the Original of Property to their covetous or ambitious Desires, which might proceed from Reason and just Appetites.

Let none blame that which was reasonable, nor ascribe that to a vain cause which was necessary. If Men were from their differing Tempers variously inclined, they will

will hereby be ingaged in differing Employments, and various Pleasures. And if every place will not afford them all sorts of Materials for their Exercise, or Objects for their Delight, if no one place will contain them all, then they must part. If they do so, every one will be best acquainted with the things he most converses with; he that knows them best, will use them best, and on that score hath most right to them, because it's fit that all things should be put to the best use that they are capable of.

And hence is it that *Possession* gives so good a *Title*; as also because it's presumed that Men will seize on that only, which by their natural Constitutions they are more disposed to use or enjoy. And besides this, it's supposed that they are for the most part not very unequal; or if they be, yet that is not so easily known: and then all this considered, no Pretence can be made, why one should be thrust out of his Possession to make way for another; since it cannot be known, that this latter will make better (but probably worse) use of what he shall have, than the former had done.

And if this were not admitted, that in Vacuities, first Possession gives Right, the World must be perpetually filled with Disorder, and Tumult, and Injustice; and he that hath thrust another out of his Possession, shall be dealt so with himself by others.

And in after-Ages, when their Title shall be examined, where will the Records be

be found by which it ſhall be cleared? Or, what other evidence can be hoped for, but a long Poſſeſſion? No People on the Earth can at this day make a better Claim than this.

And if we ſuppoſe Men idle and inordinate in their Deſires, there is a further neceſſity of *Property* and *Diviſion*: for elſe ſome would live on other Mens Labours, would do nothing, yet enjoy as much as any; and this would tend to impoveriſh the World, ſince Increaſe depends on Mens Labours.

And indeed this is one of the excellent Fruits of *Propriety*, that it is an Engagement to Induſtry, and a Spur to the Lazy; for that is the regular and innocent way for Men to acquire Right, and to become Owners.

It's true, it cannot be avoided but there will be ſome ill Conſequents of Propriety: For Owners knowing that the things they poſſeſs are part of their Power; and it being natural to Man to have an Affection for that which he uſually converſes with, and ſo loth to part with it; hence they will not many times, neither by way of Gift, nor upon reaſonable Terms, and where they may have a valuable Exchange, forgo their Title. And hence it will come to paſs, that ſome will have all, and others nothing; that they whoſe lot it is to be born of rich Parents, or who have more immoderate Deſires, and are more endleſly buſy, they ſhall abound with Wealth,

whilst they that are not so fortunate or foolish, shall be in want.

But notwithstanding these, and other like Inconveniences, we cannot be made to disallow of Proprieties, till we find that Community hath none, or fewer, which, things standing as they do, cannot be proved.

And then there is as good Provision as can be made, in the two Cases supposed, that Fools may have abundance, and Wise and Good Men be in extreme want: For, our Law gives the Estates of those that are judged Fools, to the King. And in the other Case of extreme Necessity, and where the Owner will not recede from his Right (according as some in the Civil Law determine) the Necessitous may take what will be sufficient for him in that Exigence. But then, as *Grotius* well considers, there must be these three Restrictions:

1. That the *Necessitous* cannot by any pains, or other way extricate himself; for if he can, he must. *Solon* hath well determined in one Case, that a Man must dig forty Cubits in his own Ground, before he take Water out of his Neighbour's Well; as *Plutarch* observes in his Life, and gives this Reason, because Necessity, not Sloth, *must be relieved.*

2. The second Limitation of this Rule is, That the Owner himself must not be in the same case, when his Possession shall be seized; for in this Case, *Melior est causa possidentis, & non tradentis Jus suum, quam poscentis alienum:* The Right of the Possessor

ſeſſor is always preferable to that of a Stranger.

3. The third is, That the Perſon who is now indigent, when he ſhall be able, make Reſtitution.

The ſame Author goes further, and determines, That where one may be profited, and another not inconvenienced, there doth a Right accrue to another Man's Poſſeſſion.

It's very reaſonable indeed, that the former Poſſeſſor ſhould quit his Title to that, which will be of no uſe to him, and of great uſe to another: And this is all that can be argued from that Paſſage in *Tully*; *Quidni enim, quando ſine detrimento ſuo poteſt, alteri communicet in iis quæ ſunt accipienti utilia, danti non moleſta.*

But if the Poſſeſſor ſhould be froward, and refuſe to communicate, in this caſe it ſeems not reaſonable, that the other (unleſs he be warranted by Publick Authority) ſhould raviſh his Poſſeſſion from him; for this might open too wide a Door for Diſorders.

This is the ſhort Account of Proprieties, and the ways of acquiring juſt Titles. I proceed,

Secondly; To conſider whether, and how far I may deſire any thing that another Man is rightfully poſſeſs'd of.

That ſuch *Deſires* are lawful, ſeems evident, becauſe they are the Foundation of all that Commerce, which is amongſt Men in their Bargains of buying and ſelling. If

there were no such *Desires*, there could be no such Contracts and Exchanges as there are; if we might not desire that which is anothers, then we should not ask him to lend or give us any thing: for this also, as well as that of bargaining, signifies and supposes one Man to desire to have what another hath. And if we can think God hath forbidden all such Desires, we must also think he hath prohibited all buying and selling, all begging and borrowing, which none can be so vain as to imagine.

If it be lawful for me to do that, whereby what another hath may be made mine, then 'tis lawful for me to desire it. Indeed it's impossible for me not to desire, so long as it appears good to me, and possible to be had, if I suppose Right may be transferr'd.

As soon may the Light not shine, or the Fire not burn, as the Representation of a Good that I have not, and may have, not excite Desire. These two always run parallel, are Twins, and Twins that grow together, or rather the very same. Such an Apprehension is Desire in its Infancy, Desire beginning; and Desire is that Apprehension in its Manhood, its Continuance.

Thus far then Desire is not only lawful, but necessary. And for a further and full Answer to this Question, we may, I think, safely assert, That we may desire all that we want, and another hath, to which we can acquire a title according to Law and Equity.

And

And by this we are prohibited to desire in these three cases.

1. Where the Right cannot, and we know it cannot, according to Law or Equity, be alienated; that's the Case of a Man's Wife, or a Woman's Husband. Nor,

2. Is it lawful to desire to have that, whose Right may be transferr'd, unless we have, or can presume on the Consent of the Owner; no Title can be pass'd away without this. Here we except the case of extream Necessity before mention'd.

3. Nor yet tho we suppose both these, is it lawful to desire another Man's Possession, where it will be manifestly prejudicial to him to part with it. I know 'tis said, *Volenti non fit Injuria*, and that a Man shall satisfy the Law of the Land, if he observe the two former; but he'll violate the Law of his Mind, which commands Innocence, and doing to others, as himself would be done to; and forbids him therefore to take advantage of another Man's Weakness, or Over-sight, or the like. This is the second.

III. That which I have to add both by way of Direction and Argument, shall be in these four Considerations. Two of which may pass for Rules, and may give Advice to them that are willing to have their evil Desires restrained, but know not how: and the other two may tend to perswade those that are regardless in this matter, to think it their Concernment.

1. Let every one that would prevent or subdue all Desires that are not wise, just, and innocent, inform himself truly of all his real Wants.

This may at first proposal seem rather a Method to inflame, than cool Desire: and it may be thought better Advice to him to be ignorant of, than to be acquainted with his Wants: For, so long as a Man thinks himself rich, tho he be poor, he will not ask a Supply.

But who knows how long this Ignorance may continue? that would be to make it impossible for Man ever to be happy: for Sense of his present Misery, and Distance from that good State, is the first step to his seeking it, and that's indispensably necessary to his obtaining it. For a Man to affect Ignorance for the Mortification of his Affections, is all one, as to put out his Eyes, that he may rectify the Feature or Motions of his Body. And he that would lay aside his Knowledg to regulate his Passion, murders himself to remove a Disease.

Besides, no Man can be perfectly ignorant of his Wants; and where we cannot be wholly ignorant, 'tis best to be throughly informed; till we be, we are in the Dark or Twilight, which are Seasons of Mistake and Passion.

In the Night we may as well, and do as usually imagine our Friend to be our Enemy, than otherwise; or if we do take our Enemy for a Friend, this Mistake hath indeed less of Fear, but more of Danger with it.

it. He that's benighted, follows an *Ignis fatuus* as a truſty Guide, and loſes his own faithful Companion that was with him.

Thus Ignorance increaſes our Wants, and Want is the Mother of Deſire. It cannot therefore upon any account be adviſeable to keep our ſelves from evil Deſires, by not underſtanding our Neceſſities.

This might be a way to take away Deſire it ſelf, and not only the Evil of it: for, to cure the Wound, it cuts off the affected part. That's not it we are endeavouring, to kill Deſire, but only to bind it to its Good-Behaviour. And the way to regulate it, is this which I have propoſed.

For ſurely all the Irregularities of our Deſires proceed from our failure in this Particular. Our Imagination hath made our Wants more and greater, or leſs than indeed they are; hath made them be when there were none, hath made them ſeem contrary to what they are; and hereupon we deſire where there is no cauſe: Our Deſires are over-vigorous, or too faint; are directly oppoſite to what they ſhould be.

He that imagines he wants what he hath, his Deſire will be vain; and he that apprehends himſelf to want all he hath not, he will deſire infinitely, and Impoſſibilities ſhall not ſcape him.

But he that thinks he hath no need of that, of which he hath no uſe, and knows all that's uſeful to him, and keeps his Deſire within theſe Bounds, will not tranſgreſs.

He that can come to an end of his Wants, that can determine rightly what's enough, his Desires will not be endless.

Thus far Men do generally agree, that that's only to be desired which is *useful*. But that's Wisdom to be truly informed what that is. He that knows this, and all that's useful to him, hath resolved what's sufficient, what's enough for him, and he that's determin'd in this case, cannot be infinite in his Desires.

This is the Sum. Let not our Desires exceed our Wants, nor let us imagine we want that which will not be useful, nor greatly want that which is not necessary to us. And very few are the things that are of necessary use in order to our Happiness. He that lives within Natures Bounds, is satisfied with a little; having *Food* and *Raiment*, can be *content*.

If his House will defend him against the Injuries of the open Air, tho it be not built after the newest Fashion, nor of the finest Materials, he is pleased; and is not grieved tho it have no Marble Pillars, or Flowers, curious Chimney-pieces, or Wainscot of the finest Grain, on which the *Italian* Artist hath shewn his Skill in Colours and Shadow. This Man can make a hearty Dinner, tho his his Meat be not served in Plate, tho he do not drink in Gold, nor have his Cup-board of Plate and Glasses before him, nor his Table spread with Pheasant or Partridg, or Quail. He is not much aggrieved that he doth not rustle in Silks, nor that his Suit is not

not made after the lateſt Mode at Court, his Frieze Coat pleaſes him as well: Nor doth he find himſelf more healthful, or quiet, or merry, or wiſe, or vertuous, by having large Fields, full Barns, much Cattel, and his Bags full of Silver and Gold. He obſerves, that they that have all theſe, yet live without them; they have no more than the ſight of them: and he will ſet the ſame Bounds to his Deſires, that Nature and Uſe hath ſet; and there is no difference then betwixt him that hath more, or him that hath leſs.

To conclude this Direction; When I adviſe to know your Wants, I would have you in order to this underſtand what's *Good* and *Evil*, the want of which is the great reaſon of our want of Contentation.

2. Be diligent to ſeek a ſupply of your real Wants in all lawful, likely, harmleſs Ways: Then do not increaſe them by Prodigalities and Exceſs, by vain and unreaſonable Expences. Men that are profuſe in their Expences, muſt have proportionable Incomes; and where they are unaccountable in thoſe, they muſt either be unjuſt in theſe, or they'll quickly be Beggars or Thieves; for ordinarily Men cannot, in honeſt and innocent ways, make proviſion for profuſe layings out.

(1.) Be not idle; for Idleneſs is the High-way to Want, and that to Deſire, and ſuch Deſire as ſhall be only an Inſtrument of Torment, not in order to obtain. The

Sluggard,

Sluggard, whom *Solomon* represents in his sleepy Posture, hath received this Doom he shall have *Poverty* coming on him as swift as the Traveller, and *Want* as irresistibly as an *armed Man*.

And in another place he tells us, *The Soul of a Sluggard desires, and hath nothing*: And he that hath nothing, must desire to have; and if he will not seek it by Labour, he will by some unlawful ways. The idle Man will desire; and if he desire any thing, 'tis that which he hath no Right to; for I look on that Rule of the Apostle's as an eternal Truth, *He that will not work, let him not eat*. And it almost universally obtains, as if it were of natural impression; for when we see a Man poor through his Laziness, we deny him our Alms, and send him to his Work: This seems to proceed from the Sense we have, that Idleness hath such a tendency to Injustice.

On this account those People deserve Praise, who made such early Provision against unjust Practices and Desires, when they would not give their very little Children Meat, till they had performed some bodily Exercise. And I look upon them to have out-done us in Politicks, who will have all their Inhabitants to be of some Trade: They have crush'd the Viper in the Egg, and have prevented all unjust Actions by preventing the unjust Desires. We may wrest the Poet's Words to this Sence:

Ori-

Otia si tollas, periêre Cupidinis Arcus,
Contemptaq; jacent, & sine luce faces.

(2.) That which is added in the Rule is, that our Diligence must be employed in the use of Means,

First; That are likely, else it will be foolish. And,

Secondly; Lawful, else we shall be unjust. And,

Thirdly; They must be harmless, else we cannot be innocent; and no Action can be good, where Innocence is not.

All this supposes, (which is most true) that Things are so ordered in the World, that Industry, which is wise, and just, and innocent, cannot be destitute of that which is of necessary use.

And that we need not at any time have recourse to unlikely and unlawful ways for a Supply of that which we really need: Nor are Humane Affairs so ill managed by the Wise Governour of the World, as that one must be robbed to enrich another; that I cannot be made happy, unless my Brother be made miserable.

I conclude this Direction with the reason of it, which is this, That the more wisely and harmlessly industrious any

any Man is in seeking after supply of his Wants, the less he will want; and the less he wants, the less he must desire, if he act by Reason. And so long as *Want* continues, *Desire* must; and if it be earnest, it may probably hinder us in the good use of our Reason, and so engage us in that which is dishonest, making us transgress those Bounds and Land-Marks which Propriety hath set.

On the other hand; It would be strange if the happy Man should be envious or ravening: When the Sun shines upon his Tabernacle, who can desire his Neighbour's Candle?

That which may confirm all this, is, That in all the Descriptions we have of the Golden Age, which is supposed to have been in the World, we have no mention made of Mens inordinate Desires: which shews, that when they are in good condition, these have no place; or if they have, they spoil it. And this leads me to the Arguments against all unreasonable and unjust Desires.

First; They are both noxious and vain: They do others hurt, and ourselves no good. How much Harm they do in the World, I have sufficiently declared, when I have said, that all the *Disorders*, and *Injustice*, and all the *Evil* that one Man doth another, grow from this Root. Whatever Mischief of this sort you

complain of, know that unreasonable *desire* is accessory to them.

All Murders, and Robberies, and Wars, and Over-reaching in Bargains, owe their original to this. This turns Men into Brutes, and makes Societies of Reasonable Creatures, become Dens of Lions, or Kennels of Foxes. Nay, this hath made a City less eligible than a Wilderness; and 'tis more safe to be in a Herd of Brutes, than in a Society of Men; so much more insatiable are our *Desires* than theirs: And there is therefore less Danger in converse with unreasonable Nature, than with immoderate Desires.

And as unreasonable Desires do harm to others, so they are no way advantagious to our selves: for, whilst we desire unjustly, we lay a Foundation for Disquiet to the Publick Peace, and also of Ruine to our own particular Interest. For, our Example hath an Influence on others, to make them do as we do; and that will bring in all Confusion amongst us.

Besides this, whilst any one impropriates too much, the less remains for others Uses. And this brings near extreme Necessity; and when that is their Case, they have Right to other Mens Properties; and when they are near it, they may easily mistake it for their own Case; and if they do but think it is their Case, they'll act as if it was, and seize upon that

that which they have not, but imagine they have Right to.

Secondly; Remember our Profession. We call our selves the Disciples of him, who had not *where to lay his Head*; who tho he was Lord of all, yet Possessor of almost nothing: And shall the Disciple be above his Master? Had our Lord so very little, and shall we grasp at all? Why have we need of more than he had? If we have, shew it; if not, why do we desire it? How is it that we cannot be content with Food and Raiment, (when by a harmless diligence we can obtain no more) when our Saviour was? For, if we be indeed his Disciples, that is, if we live well, and follow his Example, we have also the *Promises of this Life, and of that which is to come.* We have all Assurance given us, that the great Disposer of all Things interests himself in our Affairs, and will manage all for the good of them that live well.

We know that the worst that can befall us is Death; and that is the End of all our Miseries, and is our Passage to a blessed and endless Life. We know also, that the Unrighteous shall not be Partakers of this Happiness; that the Violent, the Oppressor, the Deceiver, shall be excluded: Nay, that they who have not subdued and overcome the *evil Desires* of doing such Things, are not owned by Christ to be his Followers,

and

and then they cannot be ſaved. And if we cannot be Chriſtians, if we cannot be happy whilſt they prevail in us, why do we ſuffer them?

Beſides; The Goſpel which we own, nay, and our own Reaſon, hath repreſented all the Things of this World as very undeſirable. We cannot but ſee how little Tendency they all have to make us happy. Do we not ordinarily find the Poor as good as the Rich, and the Servant as wiſe as his Maſter?

And we know, that all theſe Things are to us as *We* are: To the Good, all are Good. *Res perinde ſunt, ut illius animi qui ea poſſidet: Qui uti ſcit, ei bona; illi, qui non utitur rectè, mala.*

And if the Things themſelves be not valuable, their Number doth not add to their Eſteem. And our Saviour hath expreſly told us, that our *Life conſiſts not in the Abundance of Things we poſſeſs*: Nay, and that Riches make it *hard* for us to enter into the *Kingdom of Heaven*. This they do by exciting unreaſonable *Deſires*.

He that believes all this, it ill becomes him to be a paſſionate Lover of the Things of this World. The Gentiles, who are unacquainted with our Religion, who have, as we ſuppoſe, almoſt loſt their Reaſon, for them to ſeek after theſe things, is tolerable; but for Chriſtians, there is no Excuſe.

Beſides;

Besides all these Engagements which our Christian Profession lays on us, to subdue our *Desires*, there's this one other, which I will only mention, and that is, that *Universal Love*, that Love to all the World, which Christianity doth so much oblige us to. We are commanded, we are exhorted to this, the highest Examples lead us to it; our God and Saviour go before us in the plainest ways of Love and Kindness. It is a great part of our Religion, and indispensable to Happiness: Yea the very *Badg* and *Character* of Christians; so that we are not to be call'd by that Name, if we do not live a *Life of Love*; and if we do, we shall not covet what's another's. For *Love*, as the Apostle saith, *fulfils the Law*: it will not only preserve us from doing, but also from desiring any other Man's Injury.

If then we would do well to the Publick by preserving Peace and Order: if we have any regard to other Men that are like to, and generally equal with, or better than our selves: If we would not fail of Happiness; if we would not act in Contradiction to Religion and Reason; if we would approve our selves to be Men or Christians: let all our *Desires* be wise, and just, and innocent: Let it be all our Endeavours; and God of his infinite Mercy afford us the necessary Aids of his Grace, which we beg for the sake of his Son, to whom, *&c.*

OF

OF
Doing our own BUSINESS.

1 THESS. 4. 11.

That ye ſtudy to be quiet, and to do your own Buſineſs.

THE Apoſtle in theſe Words exhorts Chriſtians, that they would *ſtudy*, or ſtrive earneſtly, as Men do who are in purſuit after Honour (φιλοτιμεῖσθαι) that they would lay out themſelves, and do their beſt,

1. *To be quiet.* To give no occaſion of Diſturbance to others, to be no way acceſſory to the Diſquiet of their Neighbours; to prevent (as much as in them lies) all Moleſtations, that might ariſe in the So-

ety whereof they are Members; neither to ſay, nor do, nor leave unſaid or undone any thing from whence Commotions and Quarrels, Anger, Enmity, or any fooliſh and hurtful Unquietneſs might enſue: But on the contrary, to preſerve Peace, and Love, and Friendſhip, and Kindneſs amongſt Men. And as one of the Means that lead and contribute to this Quiet,

2. *To do their own Buſineſs*, their proper particular Work: On which, how much the Quiet and State of Men depends, may appear in the Sequel of this Diſcourſe. And I hope to make it evident, that this is a thing more conſiderable, and of far greater moment than at firſt it may ſeem, and that it deſervedly challenges our utmoſt Care and Diligence.

And this latter Duty being in order, and a help to our Diſcharge of the former, I ſhall begin with it: And ſhall enquire,

I. Into the Occaſion of this Precept, when it was given by St. *Paul*.

II. Into the true Meaning and Import of the Words here uſed. When I have done this, I ſhall offer ſome Conſiderations, which will make it appear to be good and fit, and profitable and neceſſary for us to do as we are here directed.

I. As to the Occaſion of this Precept: It was probably the ſame with that in

2 *Theſſ.*

2 Thess. 3. 12. *We command and exhort, that with Quietness they work and eat their own Bread.* Such he means, as he described Vers. 11. *Who walk disorderly,* (ἀτάκτως, out of their Rank) *working not at all, but Busy-bodies,* (μηδὲν ἐργαζομένους, ἀλλὰ περιεργαζομένους) very busy, yet did nothing, nothing they should do, nothing to the purpose; that which they did, or seem'd to do, was next to, nay, worse than nothing. They neglected their *own Business*, but would be thrusting themselves into other Mens.

By this neglect of their own Affairs, they were reduced to such Straits, that they could not live of themselves; and by their over-officiousness they so insinuated into others, that they lived upon them. Which dependent parasitical Life being so unbecoming and base, and casting so much Ignominy upon the Religion they profess'd: Nay, it being so unjust, that they who did nothing, and therefore deserved nothing, should have any thing; the Apostle enjoyns them as he had before, that *they who would not work, should not eat*: And that *they should work with Quietness, and eat their own Bread.*

This was the occasion of that Exhortation in the second Epistle; and 'tis most likely, that on the same occasion, he had before given them the same Precept in the Text, *To do their own Business*: In which we may be further confirm'd by what follows in the end of the 11*th* and 12*th* Verses, *Working with your own Hands, that ye may*

walk honeſtly towards the Gentiles, and that ye may have need of nothing. By which, as he plainly intimates, that the very Heathens did not approve of Idleneſs and Beggary, but thought it unſeemly for Men to live the Lives of Drones and Paraſites; ſo likewiſe that he ſhould prevent ſuch foul Miſcarriages, with the ill Conſequents of them, if he could engage them to mind and do their *own Buſineſs.* This would raiſe them from the Bed of Sloth, this would keep them from being Eves-droppers, and Interlopers in other Mens matters, and thereby cut off many Occaſions of great Troubles both to themſelves and their Neighbours. This would probably ſecure them from neceſſitous Dependances, and their Religion from Contempt.

Thus we ſee the Occaſion of this Precept, partly from the Hiſtory ſet down in the ſecond Epiſtle, where it is repeated, partly from the Reaſons annexed to it in this. From which we may conclude (in order to our next Enquiry) that this *doing their own Buſineſs* was ſomething, that was good and honeſt in the account of the Heathens, and that by natural Light might be diſcover'd to be ſo: Something alſo that would be a means to ſecure them from a Dependance on other Men for Neceſſaries, which is one of the worſt States of Humane Life.

Eraſmus thinks the Apoſtle had in his Eye both the *Idle*, and the *Buſy-bodies*. *Deterret*, ſays he, *ab otio, & ab alienis Appetendis*. *Grotius* is of the ſame Mind, and tells us that they

they who offend againſt this Rule, are by St. *Peter* called ἀλλοτριοεπίσκοποι, and by St. *Paul* περιεργαζόμενοι, and by the Greeks commonly πολυπράγμονες: Of which number he reckons paraſitical Smell-feaſts, drolling Buffoons, and ſuch like Flies, with which *Greece* then ſwarm'd.

II. Having ſeen the Occaſion, let us now proceed to the Senſe and Import of the Words. And here the main Enquiry is, What is meant by (the τὰ ἴδια) your own private matters, thoſe which are peculiarly and *properly yours*.

Τὰ ἴδια ſeems here to be oppoſed to τὰ ἀλλότρια, and to be diſtinguiſhed from the τὰ κοινὰ, 'our *own*, in oppoſition to other Mens, and in diſtinction from what is common both to us and them. Do *your own*, not others Mens *Buſineſs*. Do not only what belongs to all Men, but that alſo which particularly appertains to you. For our better underſtanding this, we may conſider Man under a fourfold reſpect.

1. Of his Nature as he differs from Beaſts, and as he differs from other Men, *i. e.* we may look on him as endowed with Underſtanding and Liberty in general, which is common to all Men; or, as with greater Underſtanding, with all thoſe Inclinations and Averſations (which may be ſuppoſed to be born with Men) that are peculiar to this or that Man.

2. We may conſider a Man under the various Changes that are made in his Na-

ture, the several Accessions to his natural Faculties, with all that Knowledg with which Study and Experience has enriched him; with all those Arts and Habits, which by Time and Exercise he has acquired; or else with all incurable Impairments, and Lessenings of the Faculties, either of his Body, or of his Soul.

3. We may consider him in that Condition, in which he is in respect of outward things, such as Poverty or Riches, Liberty or Confinement, Honour or Disgrace, *&c.*

4. Consider him in those Relations in which he is to other Men; whether he came into them by Necessity, arising either from Nature or Laws, or voluntarily and out of Choice: As Husband or Wife, Parent or Child, Master or Servant, Magistrate or one of the People, Teacher or Learner, of the Clergy or the Laity, *&c.*

This, with some Addition, is *Tully's Quadruplex Persona*, which every Man bears. Now as to the Business before us: Whatever Work is suitable and proper to Man under any of these Considerations, that may be said to be *his Work*; he was, as it were, made and fitted for it, it is proper to him, he is obliged by the Divine Law to do it.

And because Man cannot be supposed to have been designed for such a Work as is unsuitable to his Nature; as false Reasoning, not following his Understanding, not loving that which is good, *&c.* and because all Wickedness and Vice is thus unnatural; therefore nothing can be *proper* for

a

a Man that is unreasonable or vicious; every *Work* of his must be rational and vertuous, Truth and Goodness must be inseparable Attendants, the necessary Ingredients of every Business, which Man can call *his own*. Briefly then, that in general is called any Man's Work, which is both good in it self, and fit for him, that for which he was, as it were made and framed; that, of which by his Nature and Temper, by his Abilities and Inclinations, and Opportunities, his Relation to others, and his Conditions in respect of external Goods and Evils he is capable, and for which he is fitted.

Thus we call the making, the Preservation and Government of this World, the Redemption of it by Christ, the recompencing Men according to their Ways, the hearing the Prayers, and granting the Desires of the Poor, Destitute, *&c. The Works of God*, as being *proper* to the most glorious Perfections of the Divine Nature. Indeed there is nothing else to be considered besides the most absolutely perfect Nature of God, in respect of which any *Work* may be called *his*; that being the sole Cause of them all. But 'tis otherwise with Man, who both in his being and working, so depends on God, and on other things, that he can neither be nor act without them.

Hence it is, that many *Works* belong to Man, and are properly *his*, not only in respect of his Nature generally considered, as uncloath'd of all Circumstances, but also of his Dependancy and Subjection: In

which reſpect, that may be ſaid to be a *Man's Work*, which he is appointed to do by one who has Right to diſpoſe of him, *i.e.* God, and by thoſe who have Authority over him; That is ſaid to be a Servants *Work*, which his Maſter ſets him to do.

That alſo which a Man undertakes to do, he being at his own diſpoſe, may be called *his Work*: As alſo that which is moſtly and immediately converſant about himſelf, or about that, in which he is moſt nearly concern'd, as his Family, *&c.* which will be his in the Iſſue and Effect, as well as it was in the Beginning and Production; that which will redound to his proper Advantage and Benefit, as well as it did proceed from his Power, which will be for him, as it was from him; 'tis his *own*, i. e. for his Intereſt.

On theſe accounts any *Work* or *Buſineſs* may be called a Man's *own*. And if they be conſidered in general, as they are common to, and the ſame in all Men; they are the Foundation of that, which is all Mens *Work* or *Buſineſs*: but if they be conſidered particularly with the Differences, with which they are found in ſeveral Men, ſo they conſtitute every Mans *particular Buſineſs*.

To make this plain by Inſtances. The *common Work or Buſineſs* of all Men, is to worſhip God, and to ſerve him in promoting the Perfection and Happineſs of themſelves and all Men; and as much as in them lies in co-operating towards, and ſetting forward the good State of the whole World. To this every Man is bound in proportion

to

to his Ability, and as he has Opportunity.

The *Business* of this or that Man *in particular* is to do such part of this, and in such manner and way, as by the inculpable peculiarities, which are found in his Abilities and Inclinations, his acquisitions and the accessions he has made to his natural Power, his different conditions in respect of things without him; the particular appointments of his Soveraign Lord, and of those that have Authority from him; or by his own undertaking (where he is at liberty) he is *especially* determin'd, qualified, and obliged to do.

Every man in the World is in some particular relation to God and Men, and in a condition which Challenges some special Service from him; so that he is obliged to do something for his part (by the natural and perhaps the written Laws of God, or also by the good Laws and Customs of Men) to serve the whole Society, of which he is a Member, and God the supream Head and Governour. Every Man is a Governour or a Subject; some are set apart to attend the publick Worship of God, and the Instruction of Men in the Divine Laws; others have undertaken to study the Municipal Laws, and by their Skill in these to secure Mens Rights and Properties; others take upon them (and are authorised to do so) the Care of Mens Health; some are Husbands, Wives, Parents, Children, Servants, Merchants, Mechanicks, *&c.*

Whatever Particular Employment wherein a Man can in some *peculiar way*

set

ſet forth the Glory of God, and contribute towards any part of the good State of his Creatures, particularly of himſelf and his Family) is by one, who has Right to diſpoſe of him, laid on any Man, or according to (at leaſt with the allowance of) the Laws of God, and good Conſtitutions of Men, is undertaken by himſelf; That is *his Work*, his *own proper Buſineſs*. This is his Place, his Station, his Part, his Province, his Office, his Truſt, his Trade, his particular Calling, his Profeſſion from whence he is denominated. And to fullfil this his Place, to keep his Station, to act his Part, to govern his Province, to execute his Office, to diſcharge his Truſt, to follow his Trade, to do that which he profeſſes to do, and which he bears the World in hand he does: This the Apoſtle ſeems to mean by *our own Buſineſs*.

He illuſtrates this, *Rom.* 12. 4. by comparing Chriſtians to the Members of a natural Body. *As we having many Members in one Body, and all have not the ſame Office* (ἀυτων πραξιν the ſame Employment) *&c.* And ſo deſcends to particulars.

Which way then ſoever we ſerve the great Lord of All, in proſecuting the ends of his Goodneſs, which is the welfare of his whole Family; whether by miniſtring to your neceſſities or conveniencies of his Creatures, by ſerving the greater Bodies, or leſs Societies, or Single Perſons in reference either to this or a future Life: Whatever our Employment be, if innocent and uſeful,

if

lawful and Honest, whether in publick or a more private Capacity, in what soever we are, let us whilst we are it, *do the work of it.* *Spartam, quam nactus es, Orna*, as they use to say, and *hoc age.* look that things be well done, and that your matters be managed to the best advantage. *Understand and mind, and do this which is your proper Business.*

This I hope is sufficient to make the meanest Capacities understand what the Apostle does require of them; and to prevent those Mistakes which might arise in weak minds about this matter; and to shew that there is no interfering betwixt this and other Duties, which I have an especial regard to, lest whilst I am exhorting to the obedience of one Command, I should occasion the neglect of another, and perhaps a greater. I shall only mention the Mistakes which some may have, of which they may rid themselves by what has been said.

1. One Mistake is, that they should so do their own Business, as to allow none else to do any thing for them, to use the Service of none, to endeavour to have need of no Man, to live without the help of any. But this cannot be the Apostles meaning: because the Scriptures in many places, and the Apostle in divers of his Epistles supposes, and allows, and gives Directions both to Masters and Servants.

It was a piece of Cynical Morosness in *Diogenes*, not to have a Servant; and no way agreeable with the State in which we are,

are, nor with those Customs of the World, which Experience has confirmed to be good, and all Laws have approved. I know there is a great vanity in many, who devolve all their weighty Business, wherein their own Care is most necessary, upon their Servants, but I meddle not with that now.

2. Another Mistake may be, That we be so intent on our own Matters, as not to regard other Men's. This was St. *Paul's* Complaint, that *All minded their own things. Phil.* 2. 21. And it is the Law of Christ that we *bear one anothers Burdens. Gal.* 6. 2. The Apostle's Intent was to take Men off from vain Curiosity about, from unnecessary medling in other Men's matters: But when Humanity and Kindness, Compassion and Civility, when Justice it self calls us out of our Houses, and takes us from our Employments to help our Brethren in managing their Affairs; we are not in this case to excuse our selves under pretence that we are doing *our own Business.*

If there be danger of a *Vacuum* in the natural World, the next Bodies will (as some Philosophers speak) *against their Natures*, remove out of their Places to prevent it: the same must be done by us in the Moral World. But indeed, it is not *against Nature* that we should do thus: For, by *Nature* we are made to promote the Common Good, not our own only but other Men's, and in the Explication I have shewn, that that is every Man's *own Business*, which belongs to that Place or Station, in which he is in relation

relation to other Men. His *proper Business* has, in the very Notion of it, a reference to others.

3. After what has been said, none sure will think themselves excused from the *Common Works* of all Men, because they must do their *own proper Business*; that because I am to do that which is my particular Work, I may therefore neglect that which is every ones, but mine no less then theirs. The works of our general and particular *Calling* (as Divines express it) consist and agree and are subordinate to each other. Every Man's business is to help forward the good of the World, but that which is mine and yours in particular, is to do it in this or that way as our Place and Office requires. Do your *particular Business*, but do not think you may leave your *Common* undone. On the other hand,

4. None must think they have done what is here enjoyned, because they have done the *Common Work* of all Men. This Mistake began in the Primitive Times, and continues till ours: There were some then, who thought themselves exempted from Earthly *Masters*, by their being *Servants of Christ*: And how many are there now, who imagine that if they fast and pray, and read the Bible, and do those things which every Man in the World ought to do, they have then done all; but they have something more to do still in their Families or Shops, or Fields, in the Towns, and Kingdoms, and Churches, of which they are Members.

5. Nor

5. Nor let any so mistake the Apostle, if he forbad them at any time to rest from their Labour, or that all manner of *Diversion* or *Curiosity* must now become unlawful. No such matter, there is an ἀπραγία, a Cessation from Work, which is not only lawful but necessary. Curiosities and Diversions are natural, and may be not only innocent but useful, and so far from hindring us in our Business, that they may help us in it.

6. Nor will any, I suppose, infer, that every Man is bound to be a *Mechanick*, because St. *Paul* adds, *working with your own hands*, &c. For *first*, If he had respect to manual Labour primarily and immediately, when he required them to *do their own Business*, yet not *only*. 2*dly*, If he had respected that only, yet it cannot be proved, that he intended hereby to oblige all, but only those indigent Persons to whom he had a more particular reference, and whose Employment was of that Nature. 3*dly*. If he had a reference to all, yet he never intended to oblige them farther, than would be seemly among the Heathens; and that they might not be so poor and unjust as to eat other Mens Bread, when they did nothing towards a Compensation, nothing that would turn to account answerable to the Meat they eat.

Indeed he obliged them and us all, if our condition were such as that we stood in need of any thing for the support and Comfort of our Lives, rather to *work with our Hands*, stoop to the lowest and most laborious Drudgeries (supposing us able to undergo them)

them) than continue indigent, or in any unbecoming ways to live on others. This Obligation, on supposition that our Condition requires it, I do acknowledge is Universal, and reaches us all. But that absolutely and without any respect to this, all Men are obliged to be Mechanicks, I cannot see; or that the Apostle intended only *working with our own Hands*.

However, Certainly the Wisdom of those People, who have so great a part of the World in Subjection, may deserve our consideration, and particularly this Practice of theirs: For even their Soveraign Princes are brought up to some Mechanick Works (and probably our Lord Jesus himself was in his younger years excercised in the Trade of his supposed Father) They look not on this as inconsistent with their *Grandeur*, nor does any decline it because he is a Student; they know it conduces very much to their Health, and is no way unbecoming those that have strong Bodies: It may also be a Refuge against a Storm; the over-ruling Providence may deprive Men of what they have, and then it would be much better to Work then to Beg.

But it is enough to have mentioned these Mistakes; I must not descend to explain what every Man's particular Office requires of him, nor shall I need, for every one is the most likely to know, what he ought to do in his Place. I shall therefore content my self with what I have said in the general Explication.

Having

Having then resolved that, whatever good Work it is, of which a Man is naturally capable, and the Divine Providence has given him opportunity of doing, and has peculiarly fitted him for, and (where that is needful) has otherwise authorised him to the doing it, much more which God has commanded him to do, or Men (who have Right so to do) have imposed it on him, or himself has Voluntarily undertaken, that is his proper Work, his *own Business*: I now proceed to those Arguments which perswade us to mind, to do, to be diligent in this.

III. The considerations which may perswade us that this is very good and necessary, and according to the Will of God, are such as these.

1. The Account it was in with the wisest of the Heathens.

2. The Testimony which the Holy Scriptures give to it.

3. The suitableness of it to the Nature of Man, and to his State and Condition.

4. The numberless Benefits which flow from it, both upon our selves and others, upon single Persons and upon Societies. And also the horrible Mischiefs which arise from the neglect of it.

1. St. *Paul* gives this as one reason, why they should do their *own Business*, that they might *walk honestly*, [εὐσχημόνως] seemly, towards them that are without: which plainly

plainly implies, that when Men minded their *own Business*, they did that which was *seemly* and fit in the account of the Heathens.

It is plain what the great *Athenian* Lawgivers thought of it by these two or three Laws: Ὁ ἀργὸς ὑπεύθυνος ἔστω παντὶ βουλομένῳ γραφεσθαι; Any one that would, might indite an idle Person; he was, it seems, outlaw'd; and the Punishment in *Draco*'s Laws was no less than Death. So it was also amongst the *Egyptians*, as *Herodotus* and *Diodorus Siculus* inform us, from whom probably this Law was brought into *Greece*.

The other was, Μὴ δυο τέχνας μετιέναι, That no Man should be of two Professions, or exercise two Trades. We may suppose one Reason of this to be, lest being divided betwixt both, they should be good at neither: And another Reason, because as they would not allow Men to be idle, so neither to be over-busy; they would have them moderately employ'd.

And in pursuance of the Design of this Law, which was to keep Men at work, they required them every Year to appear before that great Court of the *Areopagites*, to give an Account how they maintained themselves.

It is a known Story of *Menedemus* and *Asclepiades*, who had no visible Estate, and yet look'd well, and liv'd handsomly, tho they followed the Study of Philosophy all day, (which it seems was not the way to get a Livelihood then neither) which made

them to be ſuſpected; and when they were cited into the Court, they call'd for the Millers, who teſtified that they wrought with them in the Nights, and ſo earn'd their Living: Which procured them not only an honourable Diſmiſſion, but alſo a great Reward from their Judges.

Beſides; They have another Law, whereby they excuſe a Son from maintaining his old and indigent Father, if he had never put him to a Trade.

Nay, amongſt them none might be allowed to keep a Servant in his Houſe, who had not been brought up in ſome Employment.

To this let me add; That I have not yet obſerved any flouriſhing Commonwealth or Kingdom, where their Law-makers and Magiſtrates have not taken care, that all Men ſhould be employ'd in ſome honeſt uſeful Calling, and be induſtrious in it.

When *Rome* it ſelf was degenerate, yet one of the Emperors, when he ſaw an officious Courtier ſprinkling Water before him, to lay the Duſt as he walked; and ſeeing he expected Thanks for it, told him, That he was ſo far from rewarding, that he uſed to puniſh Works that deſerved much better than his. But I paſs on to ſome more cogent Arguments.

2. See what the Scripture ſaith in this matter, and it is full and plain. Beſides this, and the parallel Place in 2 *Theſſ.* we have St. *Paul* exhorting the *Romans*, chap. 12. 11. that *in Buſineſs they ſhould not be ſlothful*;

Rebuke; which (by a μείωσις) signifies they should be sedulous and diligent, active and industrious. To be earnest and active in Business, he thought very consistent with *Fervency of Spirit*, and to be a part of the Service we do to God. And as he exhorted the *Thessalonians* to Industry in their Callings, that they might want nothing themselves; so he charges the *Ephesians*, that they should *work with their own hands*, that they might be able to supply the Wants of others.

Let us hear St. *Peter*, in 1 *Pet.* 5. 15. *Let none of you suffer as a Murderer, or Thief, or as Evil-doer*; that is, a Transgressor by Perjury, *&c.* of the Laws; *or as a Busy-body in other Mens Matters.* Did *Busy-bodies* suffer in those days? Were they punished as Malefactors? Was this counted a Crime? If it were punish'd in ours, we must enlarge and multiply our Bridewels.

Ἀλλοτριεπίσκοπος, a kind of *Pope*, that will not contain himself within his own See, his proper Dioceſs, but will be an Oecumenical Pastor. One that takes upon him the Inspection into other Mens Business, see in what Company the Apostle puts him; and in the next Verse plainly opposes to these, Suffering as a Christian; he look'd on these as no Christians. Let the pretended Successor of St. *Peter* well consider, how far he is guilty of what St. *Peter* here condemns.

I conclude with St. *Jude*, who gives us an account of the *Sin* of the *Angels*, which as far as I can understand by the Expressions,

was a Violation of this Precept I am now discoursing of, *v.* 6. Ἀγγέλους τε τοὺς μὴ τηρήσαντας τὴν ἑαυτῶν ἀρχὴν, ἀλλὰ ἀπολιπόντας τὸ ἴδιον οἰκητήριον. We render the first Words, *kept not their first State*; but they may as well be read, *they kept not their Principality*, their high Place of Regiment and Power, in which the Sovereign Lord had set them: They did not discharge the Office they bore in that Celestial Hierarchy. But some of them, it is likely, affecting an universal Monarchy in Heaven, and others out of Idleness, *left their own Habitation*, deserted their Station, forsook the Province allotted to them; that is, neglected their *own proper Work and Business*: For, this is spoken as their Sin, and not their Punishment; they *forsook* (not, *were cast out of*) ἴδιον οἰκητήριον, *their proper Place*. Οἰκητήριον may also signify the Place of their Administration, their Province: I know not whether οἶκος be not so to be understood, when it is said, that *Moses was faithful in all his House*.

If this were the Sin of the Angels, as it seems not improbable; it should be a Warning to us how we desert our Station, and neglect our own Business, and so either become idle and useless, or troublesom to others, and perhaps rebellious against our Governours, as they may be thought to have been: For, if we commit the *Sin*, we must expect to fall into the *Condemnation of the Devil*. So much for Scripture.

3. To

3. To do a Man's *own Buſineſs*, is very ſuitable to Humane Nature, and the Condition in which it is here. In the Nature and State of Man here, theſe Things are obſervable:

1. He is endowed with many active Powers, which were never intended by the wiſe Contriver to lie idle, and do nothing. What means this Shop of Tools which we have in our Body, if they muſt never be uſed? Man's Body is the Houſe where his Soul muſt dwell: It muſt be οἰκεῖος, whilſt in this State, the Soul muſt act with and by the Body.

2. That he is limited in his Preſence, and Power, and Knowledg. He cannot be in many Places at once, nor endure to be in perpetual motion; nor can he ſo well underſtand and act, but very little at a diſtance. Now by all theſe things he ſeems to be directed and determined by his Nature and State, to ſome Buſineſs that is near him; for, he can beſt underſtand and act where he is preſent. I ſaid, Man had many Faculties, but they are not ſufficient for every Work, for they may as well be over as under-wrought.

3. He does that moſt willingly, which he has been accuſtomed to do, and which he can do with moſt eaſe, and moſt perfectly. And this we may ſuppoſe of his own Buſineſs: For probably a Man falls upon that Profeſſion, to which he has either been trained up by his Parents, or to which

his own Inclination hath led him. Now that in which he hath been inſtructed and exercised, or to which he has been inclin'd, will be moſt eaſy to him: for he underſtands it beſt, and has greateſt Skill in it, and has likewiſe the greateſt and moſt frequent Opportunities of doing it.

He that leaves his own Work, which he is fitteſt for, and meddles with the Affairs of others, by this means neglects what he can beſt do, and faulters in the doing that for which he is not qualified.

4. He muſt be moſt concerned to do it, and beſt affected to it: For, he has a great Love to, and Care of himſelf, and a natural Affection to his Kindred, and thoſe who are near him; he is more ſenſibly moved by them than others, and by them when they are near him, than when at a diſtance?

Now this is a conſiderable part of a Man's Buſineſs, to provide for himſelf and Family; to order matters ſo, that it may be well with his Wife, Children, and Relations. If he has ſo little Love for himſelf, as not to do *his own Work*, who does he think will do it?

5. There is ſuch a fitneſs in it, that it would be a great Injuſtice for any Man not to do *his own Work*. God has committed to his Care a proper *Depoſitum*, a particular Truſt is laid on him by the great Governor of the World, which is, That he do that Good which the Place in which he ſtands, and the Relation he bears to others, calls for. If he be a Parent, he is to ſee to the Edu-

Education of his Children; if a Magiſtrate, to the keeping of the Laws of the Society; if a Miniſter, to inſtruct his People in their Duty. And whoſoever doth not the Duties of theſe and ſuch Places, they are unjuſt.

Or in whatſoever Employment any one is, if he does not what he pretends to; if he takes upon himſelf a Profeſſion, but neglects to do the Work of it, he is a Liar, a Hypocrite, makes a ſhew of what he does not do; promiſes, but performs not; bears Men in hand, makes them rely on him, but deceives and diſappoints them.

He that does not *ſuum opus facere*, cannot *ſuum cuiq; tribuere*; for, the Neceſſities of others, his Family, his Country, challenge this from him.

6. It is fit for every Man to be doing his own Buſineſs, becauſe if he do not this, he will be doing ſomething elſe for which he is not ſo fit. If he does not his own, he will be a-doing other Mens, and ſo will be guilty of two great Faults, neglecting what he is fit to do, and offering to do what he is unfit for, as I have already ſuggeſted. And to this I might add, that every Man is accountable for his own Work, and not for other Mens.

On all theſe Accounts Man is fitteſt for his own Work. And if Order be obſerv'd, every thing will be put to that uſe for which it is fitteſt, becauſe probably every thing will then attain its End. But how

unbecoming and ugly, how vain and ineffectual is it, to use Things to other purposes than those they are fitted for?

If the Ox and Horse should change Conditions, as the Poet expresses it,

Optat Ephippia bos piger, optat arare caballus;

The Saddle would not sit well upon the Ox, nor the Yoke upon the Horse: Just so unseemly, so to no purpose will it be, for one Man to undertake another's Business.

The last Argument by which I would engage all Men to a diligent Attendance on their own proper Business, is, from the numberless Benefits which will flow in upon us and others, if we do thus.

Let Reason be heard, let your own Experience and Observation be consulted, let the Records of Ancient Times be look'd into, and these will all bear witness to this Truth.

They will assure us, that Industry is the best Preserver and Restorer of Health; that the Bed of Idleness becomes very often a sick Bed; that a needless Medler in other Mens Matters, very frequently loses his Life for a punishment of his vain Curiosity.

And is not this the plain and sure Way to Riches? Have you observed many of those that mind their Business, fall into Want? I deny not but Accidents may befall them, by the over-ruling Providence. *The Battel is not alway to the Strong, nor the*

Race

Race to the Swift; but ordinarily it is. And the beſt way for a Man to ſecure his Eſtate from ſuch Accidents, is to be at his Buſineſs. *Time and Chance happens to all Things*; but commonly *Solomon*'s Obſervation holds, *The diligent Hand makes rich.*

I appeal again to your Experience, whether thoſe that break amongſt us, be the Induſtrious, the Sedulous, the Shop-keepers, the Men that mind their own Affairs; or rather the Idle, the Men who are in all places, and thruſting themſelves into every Man's Company and Buſineſs.

Our neighbouring Commonwealth puts it out of doubt, that Induſtry is the High-way to Wealth. They have no Mines, but this hath brought home the *Indies*, and hath made a Place that is barren of all things, to be the Storehouſe of theſe Weſtern Parts of the World.

Nor is this the way to Riches only, but alſo to Honour. *Seeſt thou*, ſaith *Solomon*, *a Man diligent in his Buſineſs? He ſhall ſtand before Kings, he ſhall not ſtand before mean Men*; he ſhall be exalted. There are few Men who are ſo unfit for, or ſo averſe from the Buſineſs of their Calling, but by diligence they may attain to a Maſtery, to have a perfection in it; and if they do, let it be what it will, they will be praiſed whilſt they live, and when they die, be remembred with eſteem.

But is it thus with the idle Man? No; as he is dead whilſt he lives, and as his Soul, ſo his Name is periſhed before his Body.

No

No Man was ever esteem'd for sleeping, nor is a Bed, but a Field, the Place of Honour. Have the trifling busy Medlers ever been known to gain a Reputation? No; they have constantly been the Subject of Reproaches and Scorn. How are they exposed by the Descriptions that are given of them?

Saith one, *Est Ardelionum Romæ quædam natio, trepidè concursans, occupata in otio, gratis anhelans, multa agendo nihil agens, sibi molesta, & aliis odiosissima.*

But I stay too long on these lesser Advantages. Let us go on to consider what Benefit accrues to the Soul by Mens diligence in their Callings, and minding their own proper Business. This ministers both to our Vertue, and to our Quiet.

First; To our Vertue.

1. I need not say what an Hedg this is to Vertue; from how many Temptations Business secures us, to which we are exposed by Idleness and Medling.

2. By this our Understandings are preserved. The idle Man loses his for want of Exercise; he has only some fluttering Conceits, and they are for the most part superficial, but he can have no orderly Series of Thoughts. And the busy Intruder into other Mens Business, the πολυπράγμων, his Thoughts are so distracted, that he loses his Soul in a Crowd, in too much Business, as the other did in too little: He has no vacancy, no leisure for Reflection, but is alway going out of himself.

3. This

3. This is an Occaſion for the Exerciſe of many Vertues. Every Man's particular Buſineſs is the Stage, the Theatre in which his Vertue is acted and ſeen, the Sphere in which he moves and ſhines. He has here an Opportunity to exerciſe his Prudence and his Juſtice, his Temperance and his Patience. And it is a kind of Nurſery, from whence they may be tranſplanted into a more publick Employment. In the beſt times of the Chriſtian Church, they that were admitted into the Prieſthood, were ſuch as had firſt ruled their own Houſes well; and after they had diſcharged the Office of a Deacon, ſo as to be approved, were then made Preſbyters. And never did the Roman Government proſper more, than when they fetch'd their Dictator from the Plow.

4. This will help to perfect Vertue: For, this brings it into Act, and it is never perfect till then. Whilſt it ſtays in Thoughts and Deſires, in Deſigns and Reſolutions, it is an *Embryo*; it is not compleat till it come forth in action.

5. This will help to preſerve a Man from entertaining wild and unpracticable Conceits in Religion, from running out into airy and uſeleſs Speculations, to fond Conceits, and groundleſs Imaginations, which are uſually the Products of idle Contemplatiſts, and are never confuted till they be brought to Practice, which is a Touchſtone to try them. For, whatever Mens Thoughts are in their Retirement, if they be not practical, or do not aſſiſt us in our

Practi-

Practices, they are not true, nor good.

Secondly; As doing our own Buſineſs miniſters to our Vertue, ſo likewiſe to our Quiet. I appeal to Experience, if it be not, aud to Reaſon, if it muſt not be ſo, that he who faithfully diſchargeth the Duties of his Employment, will be at peace within himſelf; when the idle Perſon is tormented with the Conſcience of his Neglect, and the Over-buſy is diſtracted with the Multiplicity of his Buſineſs, and the Medler is diſquieted with the needleſs Hazards he runs, and with the ſenſe of vain and hopeleſs Attempts.

It is with many of theſe that are ſo buſy abroad, as it is with ſome Travellers, who when they are in other Countries, are unquiet becauſe they are not in their own; and when they are there, they are uneaſy, becauſe they are not in Travel: So theſe Men are reſtleſs becauſe they do not their *own Buſineſs*; and when they are about that, they are ſo uſed to variety and rambling, that they have no quiet.

There are three things which greatly diſquiet Men:

1. When they have no one ſetled, fixed End, which they proſecute.

2. When they propound to themſelves an End which they cannot attain.

3. When they are in ſo cloſe a purſuit of their Deſign, that they have no Reſt, or Time to conſider what they are doing, or whereabout they are.

Nor

Nor is this well-guided Induſtry beneficial to a Man's ſelf alone, but to others alſo; his Family, his Neighbourhood are the better for it: If he be in publick place, the *Church*, the *Kingdom* in which he is, are ſerved by his well-regulated Diligence.

On the contrary, how many, how fatal are thoſe Miſchiefs, which he who neglects his own, and thruſts himſelf into other Mens Buſineſſes, brings upon Families, upon Towns, Churches, nay, and whole Kingdoms? when the Tradeſmen will not ſtay in their Shops, but muſt leap into the Pulpit, *&c.*

I need not be particular, but I will repreſent this by ſuch Similitudes as theſe: Whilſt the River keeps its Courſe in the Channel, it is pleaſant, it doth no harm, the Stream will carry Veſſels from one place to another, and the Water is preſerved; but if it leap over the Banks, ſpread it ſelf all over Fields of Corn, it does great Miſchief, and is loſt in the Ground.

If the Fire keep in the Chimney, its proper place, it is pleaſant and uſeful; but if it move into every part of the Room, and every Place of the Houſe, it then proves miſchievous.

The Poets have repreſented the Folly and Miſchief of buſying one's ſelf in other Mens Affairs, in *Phaeton*, who would needs mount his Father's Chariot, undertake a thing in which he had no Skill; but what came of it? Himſelf was thrown out of Heaven, and the World had almoſt been ſet on fire.

To

To come nearer: In a *Ship*, how neceſſary is it for every Man to mind his Buſineſs? how dangerous, if he neglect? How careful is every Man to do his own? If any one fail, it may coſt his own Life, and all theirs that are with him. Of ſo great efficacy is this, that they are preſerved by it, in the midſt of Waves, and Winds, and Rocks.

In an Army every Souldier muſt obſerve his Orders, muſt keep his Rank: if he do not, if he will not obey, but give Command, by this he hazards his own Life, and endangers the Loſs of the whole Army.

I add but one more: How much the Community depends on every Man's doing his Office; his own proper Work appears by the natural Body, in which if any one part fail in its Function, the Whole ſuffers; and if the Body be kept in a good ſtate of Health, every Member in it muſt do that for which by Nature it was fitted.

I need make no Application, nor add any more on this Particular; for there is no Man of any Obſervation, but ſees how much the Quiet of Families, of Neighbours, nay, and of Kingdoms, depends on this regular, orderly Induſtry: For, who are the Talebearers, the Perſons that cauſe Anger in Families, that do the Devil's Work in ſowing Diſcord amongſt Friends and Brethren? Who are the Picklocks of, and Pryers into other Mens Secrets, the Obſervers of others, the Story-tellers, the Makebates? Are they not the Idle?

Who

Who are they that sit in Judgment on every Man? Who call their Governours to account? Who gravely blame their Councils, and censure them for impolitick or unjust Administration? Are they not Men that neglect their own Business?

If others were as vain as they, and would be as inquisitive into their Affairs, as they are into other Mens; might they not discover as many Miscarriages in them, as they do in others? Why, *Thou Hypocrite, first cast the Beam out of thine own Eye: Thou that judgest another, judg thy self.* First do thine own Business, and then I dare say, thou wilt not be so much at leisure, or have no great list to meddle with other Men.

Thus I have represented some of the Advantages that arise from Mens doing their own Work, and the Mischiefs which follow on the neglect of it. They are either idle, and do nothing; or needlesly, and foolishly, and mischievously busy, and so do worse than nothing. And both ways bring innumerable Mischiefs on themselves, and are the Authors of the greatest Disturbances and Calamities in Human Society.

In short then, that I may conclude this Discourse. Such who spend their Time in doing nothing, let me ask them, Why will they *stand all the day idle?* I am sure they cannot answer me, as they in the Parable, *No one has set us to work:* For, the great Lord and Master of us all, has sent us into this his Vineyard, that we should labour in it;

it; he has given us a Charge to promote the Perfection and Happineſs of our ſelves, and of our Brethren; and has directed us to the particular ways in which we are to do it, by the natural and acquired Abilities he has given us, and by our outward Condition, and the Relations we are in to others, and the Opportunities we have; hath ſhewn us particularly what is *that Good which he would have us do.*

God and our own Nature, the Neceſſities of our private Relations, and perhaps alſo the Service of the Publick, call aloud to us, that we would up and be doing; that we would pull our hands out of our Boſom, and be at work.

Conſider alſo, when the Time ſhall come when we muſt receive according to our Works, how we ſhall be abaſh'd and confounded, if we have ſpent our Life in Sloth and Idleneſs, if we have, like that idle Servant, *laid up our Talent in a Napkin.*

I would hope that this Diſcourſe is leſs needful in this Renowned City, where you have learn'd by long experience, that whatever ſome miſtaken Gentlemen may think or ſay to the contrary, your Buſineſs is not only your Profit, but your Honour.

I will therefore ſay ſomething to the other ſort, at whom the Apoſtle aim'd in this Exhortation, thoſe that are idly and very evilly buſy, that ſpend much of their Time in obſerving other Men, are very

very inquiſitive what others do, but obſerve not themſelves. They, like thoſe Women in 1 *Tim.* 5. 13. are firſt *idle*, and then asking concerning others, (as *Grotius* renders μανθάνουσι) and *Pratlers*, and then *ſpeaking things they ought not*; for in *many Words muſt be Vanity*. They ſpeak againſt their Neighbours, againſt their Governours; nay, and perhaps ſtay not there, but go on, and open their Mouths againſt Heaven; they blaſpheme God, and ſpeak evil of his Adminiſtration of Things.

Let me a little plead with you. And firſt I will ask you, Have you ſo much leiſure over from your own Buſineſs, as to take upon you the Care of others Concerns, and ſuch as do not in the leaſt appertain to you?

1. Have you done your own Buſineſs? or have you done it ſo well? Have you ſo diſcharged your Office, your Truſt? If you have not, mind what belongs to you. Be not dreſſing other Mens Vineyards, whilſt you neglect your own; nor be ſo your Brother's Keeeper, as not to be Keeper of your ſelf.

2. Again; Let me ask you, Who made you a Judg? Has God made you a Cenſor of the Manners and Ways of your Brethren? Where is your Commiſſion? And why will you meddle with that which concerns you not? Why will you run hither neither Charity nor Wiſdom

ſends you? Why will you do ſo fooliſh, ſo vain, ſo hazardous a thing as this? Why will you ceaſe to live the innocent and uſeful Lives of Men, and live the Life of Flies; wondrous buſy, poſting from one place to another, making a great Buz, ſpoiling many things, mending nothing, cauſing a diſturbance, blowing upon every thing, but doing nothing to any good purpoſe?

If any think themſelves too much confined, and that a larger Sphere would better become their great Minds; I deſire them to conſider the Apologue: If the *Candle* ſhould think it ſelf confined in the *Lanthorn*, and therefore take it ſelf out, and ſet it ſelf upon a great Hill, it would neither be ſo ſecure it ſelf, nor ſo uſeful to others; it would be in danger to be blown out; and whilſt it burn'd, it would not ſerve the Neceſſities of Men ſo well as it did in the Lanthorn.

To conclude; Remember, I beſeech you, the Time is coming, when it will be required of every one of us, what we have done with the *Talent*, thoſe Parts, and thoſe Opportunities which were committed to us; and how we have behaved our ſelves in that Station and Place in which we are ſet; and how every one of us, Magiſtrates, Miniſters, Maſters, Servants, Merchants, Mechanicks, diſcharged our ſeveral Works we undertook.

Le

Let us all therefore be persuaded, first, to shew Piety at home, to rule well our own House, our own Province; to be true to our Trusts, and faithful in the discharge of every Office in which we are; to do carefully our own Work, whatever it be; that so when the great Lord shall come, he may find us All to have been *faithful and good Stewards:* And we may then hear him saying, *Well-done, good and faithful Servant, thou hast been faithful in a few things; thou shalt receive more.* Amen. Amen.

OF STUDYING TO BE QUIET.

1 THESS. 4. 11.

And that ye ſtudy to be Quiet.

THE Apoſtle is here after his manner, crowding together and heaping his Exhortations on one another: This he uſually does without any reſpect to their Connexion with, and Dependance on each other: He knew the Cognation of all Vertues to be ſuch, that any one diſpoſes to any, to every one. Yet in this place there is a more than ordinary Coherence betwixt the Exhortations:

For, *Brotherly Love* certainly will make Men live *quietly*: He that loves another heartily, cannot lightly disturb him; and he that is *quiet* and peaceable, will do his *own Business*, and not busily meddle with other Mens.

That this Exhortation of the Apostle deserves our great regard, will, I hope, appear upon consideration, however some may slight it, either because it is plain and easie, Or, because it seems no part of *Religion*.

Such may consider that the most useful and necessary Truths are alway most plain and certain; and that they who despise what is clear and evident, and value what is more mystical and obscure, should by the same Reason prefer the Twilight or Night before the Day.

Nor is this Mistake absurd only, but dangerous: For, from hence it is that Men take off their Minds from the most necessary and fundamental Articles of *Faith* (which are always most plain and evident) and *earnestly contend* for doubtful Opinions, and questionable Doctrines. To this also it is to be imputed, that too many from a Principle of Religion, practise Folly and Madness: For, when they once despise those low and plain Methods, wherein *God shews Man what is good*; when they will not observe their own Natures, nor value those Precepts of Scripture, which are within the reach of every Capacity; They fall into abundance of useless Observances, and too often into most destructive Practices.

When

When they will not keep that Path, which God by Nature and Scripture has made plain, they wander into impaſſible and dangerous ways.

As for thoſe who will not allow this Text to belong to Religion; They look upon it as Advice given them, how to manage their ſecular and domeſtick Affairs, and that it has no relation to their Spiritual State; Or at beſt, that it is only a piece of Morality, which they allow to come no farther than the Court of the Gentiles; that it might be a proper Argument for the Diſcourſe of a Heathen, but not of a Miniſter of Chriſt.

To theſe I ſay, that this is indeed excellent Counſel, and very advantagious to Mens ſecular Intereſts; but it is alſo of great moment to our Spiritual State, the Welfare of our Souls.

We muſt not oppoſe Soul and Body, the preſent and the future Life. *Godlineſs*, or the Chriſtian Religion, has *Precepts* as well as *Promiſes*, whereby it is *profitable to the Life that now is*, as well as to *that which is to come*. But I beſeech you take care how you ſeparate Morality from Religion, this will prove the moſt fatal Diviſion, the moſt dangerous *Schiſm* that ever was, it will be as the Separation of Soul and Body, it will be the Diſſolution, the Death of Religion.

There is no ſuch Gulf betwixt theſe two, as they imagine, who confine Religion to thoſe Actions which immediately reſpect God; no, it extends it ſelf to the whole courſe of our Lives: Nay, let us not under-

For, *Brotherly Love* certainly will make Men live *quietly*: He that loves another heartily, cannot lightly disturb him; and he that is *quiet* and peaceable, will do his *own Business*, and not busily meddle with other Mens.

That this Exhortation of the Apostle deserves our great regard, will, I hope, appear upon consideration, however some may slight it, either because it is plain and easie, Or, because it seems no part of *Religion*.

Such may consider that the most useful and necessary Truths are alway most plain and certain; and that they who despise what is clear and evident, and value what is more mystical and obscure, should by the same Reason prefer the Twilight or Night before the Day.

Nor is this Mistake absurd only, but dangerous: For, from hence it is that Men take off their Minds from the most necessary and fundamental Articles of *Faith* (which are always most plain and evident) and *earnestly contend* for doubtful Opinions, and questionable Doctrines. To this also it is to be imputed, that too many from a Principle of Religion, practise Folly and Madness: For, when they once despise those low and plain Methods, wherein *God shews Man what is good*; when they will not observe their own Natures, nor value those Precepts of Scripture, which are within the reach of every Capacity; They fall into abundance of useless Observances, and too often into most destructive Practices.

When

When they will not keep that Path, which God by Nature and Scripture has made plain, they wander into impaſſible and dangerous ways.

As for thoſe who will not allow this Text to belong to Religion; They look upon it as Advice given them, how to manage their ſecular and domeſtick Affairs, and that it has no relation to their Spiritual State; Or at beſt, that it is only a piece of Morality, which they allow to come no farther than the Court of the Gentiles; that it might be a proper Argument for the Diſcourſe of a Heathen, but not of a Miniſter of Chriſt.

To theſe I ſay, that this is indeed excellent Counſel, and very advantagious to Mens ſecular Intereſts; but it is alſo of great moment to our Spiritual State, the Welfare of our Souls.

We muſt not oppoſe Soul and Body, the preſent and the future Life. *Godlineſs*, or the Chriſtian Religion, has *Precepts* as well as *Promiſes*, whereby it is *profitable to the Life that now is*, as well as to *that which is to come*. But I beſeech you take care how you ſeparate Morality from Religion, this will prove the moſt fatal Diviſion, the moſt dangerous *Schiſm* that ever was, it will be as the Separation of Soul and Body, it will be the Diſſolution, the Death of Religion.

There is no ſuch Gulf betwixt theſe two, as they imagine, who confine Religion to thoſe Actions which immediately reſpect God; no, it extends it ſelf to the whole courſe of our Lives: Nay, let us not under-

value Morality, as if it did not (if rightly underſtood) make the far greateſt part of our Religion; or as if it were not neceſſary to make us good and happy; for nothing can be more neceſſary than that is, nothing can be ſo neceſſary as that.

This I premiſe, that no Prejudice whatſoever may make the Apoſtle's Exhortation leſs effectual: The particular occaſion of which ſeems to have been this: There were thoſe among the *Theſſalonians*, who were thruſting themſelves into other Mens *Buſineſs* and Concerns, but neglected *their own*, by which they occaſion'd Trouble to themſelves, and Diſturbance to their Neighbours. The Apoſtle therefore, willing to reform this great Abuſe and Diſorder, and to remove and prevent all that Diſquiet and Diſturbance which roſe from it: He requires them in general, *To ſtudy to be quiet*, *i. e.* to keep themſelves and others out of Trouble, to do nothing that may cauſe, or, but occaſion diſquiets, to omit nothing that may keep them off. And in particular, he adviſes them to do their *own Buſineſs*, which implies that they ſhould not meddle with other Men's; this having been the Inlet to, and Cauſe of thoſe Diſturbances which had been amongſt them.

This appears to have been the occaſion of theſe Words. In diſcourſing of which, I ſhall,

I. Explain and declare what is the Duty here enjoyned.

II. Shall

II. Shall offer ſome Reaſons of it.

III. Shall lay down Directions, and give ſome Advices, whereby we may be aſſiſted in doing it. And having ſhewn what it is we are to do, and why, and how it is to be done, I ſhall conclude with a ſhort Reflexion upon the whole.

I. For Explication of the Words. That which we here render, *to ſtudy*, ſignifies ſuch an earneſt Contention, as Men uſe when they are in purſuit of Honour: therefore it denotes the ſhewing our greateſt Care, and exerting our utmoſt Endeavours.

That about which we are required to be ſo earneſt, is *to be quiet* (ἡσυχάζειν) which Word when it is applied to *natural* Agents, ſignifies Reſt, the Abſence of, and the Oppoſite to Motion: When it is transferred to *moral*, we underſtand by it a Privation or Ceſſation from ſome voluntary Action or Paſſion, which may be either good or bad, but is for the moſt part bad, either phyſically or morally, or both. So this Word is rendred, *to keep ſilence*, in the *Acts*; and in St. *Luke*, *to reſt from Work*; in other Authors it is commonly put for *Truce* and *Peace*, and is oppoſed to *War*; and likewiſe to πολυπραγμοσύνη, to *being unduly and overbuſy*; and indeed to all *Trouble* whatſoever, a quiet and a troubled Mind are Expreſſions of two very contrary States, as all underſtand them.

I ſuppoſe the Apoſtle might uſe the Word in this large Senſe, and ſo give a general Precept

Precept on a particular occaſion of the Troubles that aroſe from ſome Mens Negligence in their own Affairs, and Pragmaticalneſs in other Mens, to which he chiefly referr'd: And I ſhall have regard to this alſo in my Diſcourſe, tho I ſhall not confine my ſelf to it, but ſhall conſider *Quiet* more largely, as it denotes freedom from other Troubles, beſides thoſe that have their Riſe from the meddling with matters that belong not to us.

Some perhaps may here enquire, whether this Precept be univerſal, and how far it obliges, whether in all Caſes, or in ſome only? I anſwer;

1. This reaches Chriſtians of all Times and Places, as well as thoſe that lived in *Theſſalonica* 1600 Years ago. For, it was not founded on any particular, but on general and eternal Reaſons, and is a Law to us all.

2. I cannot ſay it obliges us either to be our ſelves, or to keep others always *quiet*, (for in many Caſes, this is neither poſſible, nor fit, nor beneficial) yet it does lay this Obligation on us, alway to intend and aim at, to purſue and endeavour after it, even in thoſe very Inſtances where it would be evil and miſchievous to us, if we were not under ſome preſent Diſquiet, we are in and by thoſe particular Troubles to ſeek after *Quiet*.

And when we are, and it is good we ſhould be under ſome Diſcompoſure, yet ought we to take care, that we be not prodigal

digal of this Treasure, and that we forego no more than Necessity extorts; *i. e.* we ought not, where we can help it, to suffer our selves to be more or longer under Trouble, than will serve for the attaining some greater good, some greater and more lasting Tranquillity. As much as is possible, we should take care never to suffer our selves to be disturbed, unless it be in order to something that is better, and will be attended with a greater *Quiet* than that was, of which by this Trouble we were dispossessed.

If we do otherwise, we make a very foolish Bargain: for, we shall part with a present and certain Good (as *Quiet* is) for something that is worse, or that we are not sure of obtaining. We must do in this case, as Merchants do, when they are in danger of Shipwrack; then, and not till they be out of hopes to save themselves any other way, will they throw their Goods over-board. We must never part with our *Quiet*, but to gain something better by it: part with it as the Husbandman does with his Seed, which he throws into the Ground; forego some present *Quiet*, that it may be restored unto us with great Encrease.

Thus then we are obliged to *be quiet* in all cases, where it is good so to be; and it is good (as all things else are) as far as it hath a Tendency to the Perfection, and best State of our selves and others: and wherever it will contribute more to this, than the contrary Trouble, there it is not only positively

poſitively, but comparatively good, and is to be preferr'd.

This, I think, is as much as is neceſſary to be ſaid for the Satisfaction of this Enquiry, how far we are obliged *to be Quiet, viz.* in all Inſtances, where we do not know that it is better to be diſquieted; that is, where that is abſolutely neceſſary to procure ſome greater Good, and ſo to make way for a greater and more durable *Quiet.*

This may ſuffice to ſhew how far we are obliged to keep our ſelves quiet. But ſomething more ſhould be added concerning the Obligation that lies on us as to others. Two things I ſhall advertiſe.

1. That we cannot judg ſo well for them, as we may for our ſelves, when it will be beſt for them to be diſturbed; and conſequently it will be ſeldomer that we muſt deprive them of their Quiet, than we may forgo our own. For, we muſt never do this, but when we know it is beſt, and that we can very hardly know of other Men. But this is not all neither. For,

2. We muſt alſo know, that we are fitted with Skill and Power, and qualified with Authority to give them this Diſquiet. For, how profitable ſoever it might be to them, yet if we be not thus inſtructed and authorized for the doing it, we muſt not do it. *E. g.* I a private Man, muſt not take upon me to puniſh another Man's Child or Servant, tho his Father, or Maſter, or the Magiſtrate may.

By

By what hath been ſaid, may appear, how far this Precept of *Studying to be Quiet* is obligatory; and it does appear to be of a large extent. For there are few Inſtances, wherein we can ſay concerning our ſelves, that it is better and more conducing to our happineſs, that we be in Trouble than in Quiet.

And there are fewer, in which we can pronounce thus concerning other Men, who are leſs known to us than our ſelves. And where we can come to any certainty concerning them, yet for the moſt part we want Wiſdom to manage their Diſturbance to ſuch an advantage, or Warrant from the Laws to undertake it.

Our Saviour would not give Sentence betwixt two Brothers, when one of them deſired it; and it was on this account, becauſe he was not authorized, *Luke* 12. 14. *Man*, ſaith he, *who has made* (τὶς κατέςησε) *who has conſtituted me a Judge or Arbitrator amongſt you?*

II. I proceed now to give Reaſons why we muſt uſe our utmoſt endeavour to be quiet our ſelves, and do nothing to trouble and diſturb other Men, but all we can to make and keep them quiet too. They are all contain'd in this one, *viz. Quiet* is ſo excellently and ſo unalterably *Good*, and *Trouble* has always ſo much *Evil* in it, and is almoſt always ſo hurtful, or at leaſt unprofitable, that if we be duly affected to things, we muſt ſtrive to be Quiet with all our Might.

We

We ſhall be convinc'd of this, if we conſider the following Particulars.

1*ſt*. That to be Quiet is the Deſire of all Men that have ever been. The very *Soldier* himſelf, who of all Men ſeems leaſt to regard it, yet makes this his Motto, *Pax Bello quærenda*: By all the Noiſe and Shouting, the clattering of Armour, and roaring of Cannons, he hopes to attain a firmer Peace at the laſt. And how ſweet, how welcome is it to him when it comes?

The Common People, as many of them as have the Wiſdom to underſtand the goodneſs of their Condition, how far are they from envying the High and the Great? How do they applaud their own State? And it is meerly from this conſideration, that they can be Quiet, when the other live in Noiſe and Hurly-burly, and their Souls are in a Hurry and Tumult. On the contrary, thoſe great and rich Men envy the others Quiet. All their Wealth and Honour doth not ſatisfie them without this; and this, with a very little Portion of thoſe other things, makes the mean Man contented. Thus both of them confirm *Solomon*'s Obſervation, *Prov.* 17. 1. *Better is a dry Morſel with Quietneſs, than a Houſe full of Sacrifices with ſtrife.*

Now if that be good which all deſire, then we muſt conclude it very good to be Quiet; becauſe if any thing be, this is the Univerſal Deſire of all Sorts and Conditions, of all Ages and Sexes. In whatſoever the Old and the Young, the Learned and the Ignorant

Ignorant Man differ, yet they agree in this, they all intend as much Quiet to themſelves as they can have, and to avoid trouble.

2. This is one great end of the two great *Ordinances* of Heaven, the *Magiſtracy* and the *Miniſtry*, to keep Peace amongſt Men; for this cauſe eſpecially Laws are made, and for this cauſe they are executed. That which is principally deſign'd by all wiſe Governours, is, as is commonly expreſt, the Peace and Proſperity of their Subjects.

And if *we* of the *Miniſtry* underſtand our own Function, and proſecute the true end of it, I am ſure we ſhall be the *Peace-makers* of the World. For there is nothing more evident, than that this is a great part of the deſign of that Goſpel which we preach; and any Man may diſcern this to be the neceſſary reſult of the Chriſtian Inſtitution, to make Men *Peaceable*. So that if we preach the Doctrine of Jeſus Chriſt, and purſue the true ends of our Office, we ſhall promote *Peace on Earth, and Good-will amongſt Men.*

And if any of us be found Dividers and Troublers, Breakers of the Peace, Sowers of Diſcord, Contentious, and not Healers of Breaches, Enders of ſtrife, and Peace-makers, we may call our ſelves *Miniſters* of *Chriſt*, but he will not own us as ſuch at that great Day.

3. I conclude the great goodneſs of *Quiet*, and the evil of Trouble, when I obſerve that it has been the *Way of God* with Man, in almoſt all his Diſpenſations toward him,

to

to keep us from great Diſquiets.

When he firſt manifeſted himſelf to *Adam* after his diſobedience, how ſedately does he reaſon it with him and *Eve?* and it was in the cool of the Day, the time fitteſt for Quiet Meditation.

Afterward, when he was pleaſed to viſit *Noah*, and to make a Covenant with *Abraham*, and renewed it with *Iſaac* and *Jacob*, how did he lay aſide Majeſty, and appear to them in ſuch a manner, that they ſeem not at all to have been terrified? as their familiar Conference makes very plain. In the giving of the *Law* on *Sinai*, tho' the Divine Wiſdom thought it neceſſary to make ſome Impreſſions on the fears of a People, that were ſunk below more ingenuous Principles, yet that terrible Sight was at a diſtance from them, and they received the Law from *Moſes*, a Man like themſelves.

And in all the old Diſpenſation, when God manifeſted himſelf and his Will to the Prophets, and by them to the reſt of Mankind, how well did all his Adminiſtrations comport, with the calm and compoſed Frame of Man's Mind? That which was once ſaid, might be ſaid almoſt generally of all the Divine Appearances to Man; that *God was not in the Wind, nor in the Earthquake, nor in the Fire*, *Kings* 19. 11. (all terrible things) *but in the ſtill Voice.*

But that which makes this undeniable, is the laſt and great Adminiſtration of Humane Affairs, by *God's only begotten Son*, and by

by his *Holy Spirit*. The Son of God became Man, and *took upon him the form of a Servant*, that we might think of, and addreſs to him without any Diſcompoſure. And how quietly did he behave himſelf? He indeed fulfilled the Prophecy which ſaid, that *he ſhould not cry, nor lift up, nor cauſe his Voice to be heard in the Street*.

As he was *meek* and *lowly* all his *Life*, ſo at his *Death*, *like a Sheep before his Shearers is dumb, ſo he opened not his mouth*. If at any time he clad himſelf in Zeal, and appeared in Anger, yet this troubleſom Paſſion was in him ſo moderate and calm, and under the Government of Wiſdom and Charity, that it neither diſcompoſed him, nor thoſe with whom he converſed.

The holy *Spirit of God* in his moſt plentiful effuſions, had not this effect to make Men raving and frantick, but calm and compoſed. All his Influences fall on our Souls gently and eaſily: he does not uſe Violence and Force, but moves us naturally. He does not affright and amaze, but inſinuate; nor ſuddenly excite vehement Paſſions, but inſtruct and teach; and in this natural way raiſes thoſe Affections that are conſequent on, and do comport with the uſe of our Minds.

If we take a view of all the Methods which the Wiſdom of God has uſed with us, we ſhall obſerve that his *Doctrine has diſtilled* on us *as the Dew, and his Speech has dropp'd as the Rain, as the ſmall Rain on the tender Graſs*: as *Moſes* ſaid of his, that is,

gently and gradually, and in no ſuch way as might aſtoniſh and diſmay us. As there was no *noiſe of Axes and Hammers* in building the *Temple* at *Jeruſalem*, ſo neither has any noiſe been in building the Temple, of which that was a Type, the *Chriſtian Church*.

Since then *God* hath been pleaſed to adminiſter humane affairs in ſo *quiet* and ſtill a way, as not to put us into the leaſt Diſcompoſure, we cannot but conclude, that a quiet even frame of Spirit, is *with God a thing of great Price*, and therefore moſt excellently Good.

4. If any deſire yet further aſſurance in this matter, let him conſider the *Nature* of Man. Let him conſider it both Singly and in Society, and ſee if *Quietneſs* be not exceedingly well ſuited to it, and if the contrary be not very incongruous.

Let any one that ſees a Man in Fury and Rage, or under any diſturbance, ſay if he be himſelf, if this become him. On the contrary, if he ſee him quiet and compoſed, and reaſon calmly and cooly, this is a pleaſing Sight; now he acts as he thinks a Man ſhould.

It is for Lions and Tigers, for Bears and Wolves to roar and howl and rage; but this is not fit for Men; it belongs to them to reaſon, and to be wiſe, and judge truly of things; but *Wiſdom* and *Unquietneſs* are ſeldom conſiſtent together.

And for *Society*, tho' it is a moſt lovely thing when the Members of it are all united

ated in a firm Peace; yet when they are Quarrelsome and Contentious, when they are clashing with each others Interests, there is not a more horrid Monster to be found than this; It appears ugly and deformed to all Men.

From whence it appears, that *Quietness* is most agreeable to Humane Nature, whether alone or incorporated in Society; and consequently highly good and commendable.

I need not add to this, how well it becomes us, as *Christians*, to be quiet. I will only say this, he that hath the Faith of Christ, what should dismay or disquiet him? He may triumph over all the troublers of other Mens Peace, and say that none of them all shall discompose him.

5. To this we may add the numberless Advantages, which arise from being quiet, both to Single Persons and to Bodies of Men. He that keeps himself undisturb'd, hath a clear understanding, a perfect freedom, and is hereby enabled to the best Discharge of all the Functions of his Mind. He enjoys a great and constant satisfaction: this being the State of (and according to *Epicurus*) the highest Pleasure.

In short, this Man hath attain'd to a great degree of happiness already, and is in the ready way to the most consummate Perfection and Bliss of which he is capable.

6. This is intrinsecal to, and an essential part of Happiness, insomuch that it cannot be without it. No Man that is in trouble is

is happy, and no Man that is *quiet* can be thought miſerable.

After all this, which is but a ſhort ſummary of what might be ſaid to ſhew the goodneſs, the profitableneſs, the abſolute neceſſity of Quiet, ſure every one will ſet an high value on this moſt ineſtimable Jewel, and will by no means prodigally throw away his own, nor uncharitably hinder other Men's *Quiet*. Nay, I hope every one will by the excellent Goodneſs of this be perſwaded to be ſo wiſe as to provide for, and ſecure Quiet to himſelf: and that he will alſo, in all prudent and fit ways beſtir himſelf, that all others may live quiet and peaceable Lives as well as himſelf.

Since therefore *Quiet* is ſo neceſſary to ſo great a part of humane Happineſs, out of the deſire we have that both we and others ſhould be happy, let us endeavour to keep them and our ſelves quiet: and as we would not be acceſſary to our own, or their miſery, let us not trouble our ſelves or them.

III. I proceed now to the Directions and Advices, whereby we may be aſſiſted in the Performance of this great and good Duty.

I begin with thoſe, that reſpect every Man's *own Quiet*. Indeed this is in the firſt place to be looked to; becauſe it will have a mighty Influence on the Quiet of others. There is nothing more truly obſerv'd than this, that if a Man be at Peace within himſelf, he will behave himſelf peaceably to others. And accordingly we may ſee, that

all

all they who are the Disturbers of the Peace of Societies, are unquiet in their own Minds. They have unsatisfied Desires, ungovern'd Appetites, tumultuous Passions, a War within their own Breasts; Understanding and Will, Reason and Passions are at variance: How can it be then, but that as they are in themselves, they should be to others?

He that does not keep Peace within himself, how is it to be expected he should keep it in his Family, or Neighbourhood, in the Church or State wherein he lives? The first Springs of all the Disorders, Commotions, Tumults, Wars in the World, are the Disorders and Commotions that are in the Minds of private Men.

My general Counsel to particular Persons is, That they would strive after *Perfection*, or *all Good* in *themselves* and *others*, by a diligent, constant, orderly Exercise of all their Faculties, and pursuit of all their Inclinations.

The reason of this Advice is, That we naturally and necessarily desire the Perfection of our selves or others, and we cannot be *quiet* but in the Accomplishment of that great Desire, which our great Creator hath implanted in our Natures, and hath rooted so deep, that it can never be separated from them.

More particularly; Let us above all keeping, keep a *good Conscience*, a Conscience void of Offence toward God and Men. Let us undertake every thing with the Cour-

ſel of our own Mind, and do every thing ſo as to have our own Approbation, and to have reaſon to believe that we are *approved by God*, and by all wiſe and good Men. If we do thus, we do well, and that is the only firm Foundation of inward Peace.

On the other hand, *There is no Peace to the Wicked, but he is like the troubled Sea, whoſe Waters caſt up Mire and Dirt.* He is troubleſome to himſelf, and he that is ſo, will be troubleſom to others.

This is the Sum of the Advice I would give, in order to our being quiet in our ſelves, Live well, do good, be holy and vertuous.

And if we would endeavour that others may be quiet, as we our ſelves are, let us endeavour to promote their Holineſs, and Vertue, and Perfection, as we do our own: For aſſuredly, an unmoveable Quiet, and a ſure and laſting Peace, can be ſet on no other Foundation, but Holineſs and Vertue. So much are they miſtaken, who think to make Men quiet, by making them vicious, and wicked, or by leſſening their Underſtanding.

They that govern the World, and deſign the Peace of it, would do well to obſerve, if this courſe they take, be the way to make any Man quiet in himſelf; if Ignorance and Wickedneſs will make him peaceable within, then they may expect the ſame ſucceſs from them in Societies and States: but if moſt of our inward Trouble riſe from

from theſe Springs: Why ſhould it not be thought that they will have the ſame Effects in others, which they have in us, in Communities as in private Perſons; and that they will as much diſturb the World, as they do the Mind where they are?

No, if *Politicians* would obſerve, they might take notice, that as Satisfaction of Appetites, and purſuit of the Inclinations, which are natural, and the neglect of thoſe that are not; the conſtant and orderly exerciſe of all our natural Faculties in a tendency to the Perfection of the vvhole, is the only vvay to procure an univerſal and laſting *Quiet* in a Man's own Mind; ſo neither is there any other way to procure the Peace of all Men.

Yet more particularly; the Sum of what I ſhould adviſe for the removing and obviating Trouble, and the procuring and preſerving *Quiet* in our ſelves and among Men, is;

1. That we ſhould oppoſe no Man's true *Intereſt*, where that does not oppoſe the publick and greater Good.

2. That we ſhould reconcile it with, nay, as much as is poſſible, make it our *own*, as indeed it is, ſince no Man can be happy if another be miſerable. No Man can be quiet in himſelf, vvhile another that is by him is in trouble.

3. Be willing to remit of, and recede from your ovvn ſtrict *Right*, if that vvill contribute to Peace. So *Abraham* did vvith *Lot*, tho being the elder, and his Uncle, he

might, if he vvould, have inſiſted on it, have had the choice, yet he leaves it to *Lot*: *See, the Land is before thee*, ſaid he, *&c.*

4. Keep your ſelves *innocent*, hurt no Man by Word or Deed; let no Man be the vvorſe for you: Do ill to none, ſpeak ill of none. Do not take upon you to be an Hiſtorian, an Intelligencer of Mens Faults, nor ever uncover the Shame and Nakedneſs of your Brother, but vvhen Neceſſity compels, and Charity incites you.

5. Be *juſt*: Allow every Man that vvhich the Lavvs of Nature and Society have given him. Intrench the Rights, invade the Properties of no Man: do not abridg him of that vvhich God and Nature, or Men have conferr'd on him; or, vvhich by his ovvn Vertue, his Prudence, Care and Induſtry he has acquired.

6. Be univerſally *charitable*; that is, be willing to contribute vvhat in you lies, to every Mans Happineſs. Maintain a conſtant Diſpoſition to Goodneſs and Benignity. Hate none, envy none: Love not only your ſelf, or a few, but all.

7. Be diligent in your *own Buſineſs*: for by this means, you,

(1.) Will have more Liberty, and be better able to aſſiſt others. *Work*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *that ye may have to give to him that needs.* The diligent Man doth not only get that which is ſufficient for his own Neceſſity, but an Overplus for other Men: whereas the idle Man, his *own Mouth* (as *Solomon* ſaith) his own Wants take up not only all that

that he gets, but ſtill calls for more. And yet,

(2.) The diligent Man, tho he has ſome time to ſpare from his own Work, he hath not ſo much as to throw away in a needleſs buſying himſelf in other Mens matters: he is ſo much at liberty from the Service of himſelf, by his having been diligent, as that he hath leiſure to help his Brother; to do whatever *Juſtice* and *Charity* under the Conduct of Prudence ſhall direct him: but his Diligence will not ſuffer him to be vainly and merely out of *Curioſity* prying into, and buſied about other Mens matters. *Tantumnè ab re tua tibi ſuppetit otii aliena ut cures, eaq; quæ nihil ad te attinent?* What, ſaith he to himſelf, when he finds he is haſtily ingaging himſelf in ſuch foreign Affairs, Can I find nothing to do of my own, that I muſt thus go a forraging for Work? Is not mine own Vineyard neglected, whilſt I dreſs other Mens? Is there not ſomething to be done, which is more my proper Buſineſs than this I am about?

This is that which follows in the Verſe, *to do our own Buſineſs*; which one Counſel, if it were well minded, would prevent the moſt and greateſt Troubles that we have from one another. If we would keep within our own Compaſs, move in our own Spheres; reach not at things too high for us, engage not to do what we cannot do; not judg, where we do not underſtand; obſerve

our

our Order, and keep our Rank; it would contribute very much both to the quiet of our own Minds, and to the Peace of the World. The neglect of this *one thing*, ſeems to have been the great cauſe of all the Sin and Miſery, and conſequently the Trouble that is in the World. The proud *Angels left their own Habitation*, their Province, and this was their Fall.

To be ſhort: Carry about no idle Tales: Do not make, nor widen Differences: Allow not thy ſelf in any Angry Contention: indeed never contend with others, but who ſhall do moſt Good.

And now in a word, to reflect upon what has been diſcourſed: If *Quiet* be ſo good and deſirable, if we have ſo much reaſon to ſeek it, let us take Shame to our ſelves, that we have ſo much neglected, that we have ſo much oppoſed ſo great a *Good*, that we have been Enemies to our own and other Mens Peace.

I doubt we have all too much reaſon to tax our ſelves of being notoriouſly faulty in this Particular. How little have we ſtudied our own *Quiet?* how have we diſturbed other Mens? And what a cauſe of Lamentation is it, when we ſee Mankind ſuch Troublers every Man of himſelf, and every Man of his Brother; that whereas we ſhould be taking all good ways to pleaſe and

and quiet our ſelves and others, we are running faſt in the ways that lead to Sorrow, but the *way of Peace* we will not *know!*

Let us no longer be ſo fooliſhly, ſo unnaturally wicked, as to be Troublers of our ſelves and others; but in all wiſe and good ways poſſible, let us do our utmoſt, that both we and all other Men may be as quiet here on Earth, as is compatible to this State; that this may be to us the firſt-Fruits of that Eternal Sabbatiſm, that perpetual *Reſt*, which remains for the *Peaceable*, the Children and People of God.

OF

and quiet our Selves and others, we are run-
ning fast in the ways that lead to Sorrow,
but the ways of Peace we will not know!

Let us no longer be so foolishly, so un-
naturally wicked, as to be Troublers of our
Selves and others; but in all wise and good
ways possible, let us do our utmost, that both
we and all other Men may be as quiet here
on Earth, as is compatible to this State; that
this may be to us the first-Fruits of that E-
ternal Sabbatism, that perpetual Rest, which
remains for the Peaceable, the Children and
People of God.

OF EDUCATION.

PROV. 22. 6.

Train up a Child in the way he ſhould go.

THere is a general, and I doubt a very juſt Complaint of a moſt groſs, and almoſt univerſal Neglect in the *Education of Children.* And indeed I fear, if a *Viſitation* were made of every Family and School in the Land, few in compariſon would be found, who take care of, or have Skill in this great Buſineſs.

Thoſe who ſeem not to be negligent, I would ask them, What Time they beſtow, what Thoughts they lay out on their Children? I would enquire after the Deſigns and Methods they have, all the Contrivances and

and ways they use with them. And I am afraid those that are thought by others, and think themselves most careful, would not be able upon such an Enquiry to clear themselves of great Negligence; they would appear both very unskilful, and very careless.

And yet this thing which is so little regarded, and less understood, is of as great Moment and Consequence as any one thing; and that both on a publick and private account. And among the other, perhaps there is not a greater and more general Cause of all Wickedness, and of the Mischiefs consequent upon it, than the no, or ill Education of Children.

We do, and we have too much cause to complain of Infidelity and Atheism, of the Profaneness and Debauchery, of the Unsetledness, the Superstition and Fanaticism, the perverse Schismaticalness, the dull Formality, and great Corruption of the Age in which we live. One main cause of which, if we look back, we shall find to have been the want of Care and Skill in the educating of Children.

I shall consider,

I. The Action that is here required, *Train.*

II. The Object, *a Child.*

III. The Specification, *in his Way.* And then I shall propound some Reasons and Arguments to perswade us to this Duty.

I. As

I. As to the Action, *Train*: This Word does fully expreſs the Original, which alſo is tranſlated *Catechiſe*: And it ſignifies two Things:

1. Inſtructing or teaching, which is done by Precepts, and by Examples.

2. Initiating, inuring, exerciſing. Thus Souldiers are train'd when they are exerciſed in handling of their Arms, in their keeping Rank and File, and in the doing of thoſe things which they muſt do when they come to encounter an Enemy.

This is that which the wiſe Man adviſes to be done by the Child; let him be *trained*. And 'tis excellent Counſel, much better than if he had ſaid only, inſtruct or teach. For, as the diſciplin'd and exercis'd Souldier is much more dextrous at the Management of his Arms, than he only, who has been told what he muſt do, but has never us'd to do it; ſo undoubtedly, he who has been initiated in his Work, will be far more ready at it, and more diſpoſed to it, than he who has only been directed what, and perſwaded why he ſhould do it, but has never begun to do it.

We obſerve a very great diſtance betwixt our knowing what and why we ſhould act, and our acting. How frequent is it for Men very well to underſtand what is to be done, and yet not to do it?

In many Caſes alſo, Actions are never underſtood but by acting: The doing of many Works informs and incites, and enables

us

us more than any other way: Nay, the very Attempt/and Eſſay/at that which we cannot yet do, we all know carries ſo much Power along with it, that we are in time, and by frequent Trials, enabled to do that well, which we could not do at all when we firſt attempted it.

I have the rather taken notice of the force that is in the word *train*, becauſe, as I have ſaid, we may in ſome Caſes underſtand, and not act: and in ſome, acting is the beſt way to underſtand; I am ſure it is always the beſt Method to ſecure and keep that Knowledg, and thoſe Inclinations which we have to ſuch Actions. In *Practicals*, the beſt Knowledg and the ſtrongeſt Inclinations are got by Practice: Uſe inclines Men to repeat the ſame Actions: And Cuſtom has always been eſteemed a ſecond Nature.

II. I proceed to conſider the *Object*, who it is that is to be thus *trained*: It is a *Child*, *i. e.* Man whilſt he is young, and when he is firſt capable of this Inſtruction and Exerciſe.

Man is ever to be learning. *Cato* thought himſelf never too old to learn: And every other Man ſhould think the ſame, but there is very great Advantage of this being begun betimes. They that make no entrance on a thing in their firſt Years, ſeldom are brought to it afterwards; or if they be, 'tis always with great Difficulty; and it muſt be with Damage; for they are hindred from making progreſs in ſome other matters more conſide-

considerable, whilst they are exercising themselves in those which they ought to have learn'd whilst they were young. Besides, Men seldom bring those Works to Perfection, which they begin whilst they are old; for most of them are such as require a considerable time for the doing them. I am sure that is such which we have here mentioned.

III. That in which the Child must be train'd, is *his Way*; so 'tis in the Hebrew, which we render, *the Way he should go*, that is in the course and kind of his Life and Practice, in what he should *do all the days of his Life*; let him begin to walk in that way, let him be initiated in the Work and Business of his Life; let him begin betimes what he should always be doing.

His Way, i. e. in that Practice and Life for which he was made; in the doing those Works, for which his Nature was design'd by his great and wise Creator, and for which he is, by peculiar Endowments and Abilities, Temper and Disposition, as well as by his Condition and Circumstances, fitted and capacitated.

This I take to be the true meaning of that Phrase, *His Way*, which implies two things:

1. The Way that's common to all Men, the Way of Man, of every Man, every one endow'd with humane Nature and Faculties

2. That Way, which is peculiar to this, or that, or the other Man; that for which, by his *Genius*, (as we ſay) by his Temper and Inclination, or by his external Condition he is moſt adapted, and fit, and as it were, ſet apart: That is by Divines commonly called, our general Calling, this our particular.

That Way which is common to all, and is the *Way of every Man*, is the doing thoſe Works, which every one that has the Nature of a Man, is made and furniſhed to do. I need not mention thoſe of the Body, which are common to us with Beaſts. But the other, which are more peculiar to Man, and belong as it were to him, are Knowledg, and Choice, and keeping good Order among all our Faculties, purſuing the Inclinations we have to our own Perfection and Happineſs; and to help others to be in as good a condition as our ſelves are, or would be: To be devout towards God: To be juſt, and honeſt, true, and faithful, and charitable to Men: To do that univerſally, which we think to be fit and right, which, upon the largeſt knowledg we can get, we judg to be good: To do no Evil, and to do all the Good we can poſſibly: This is the *Way of every Man*.

That which is *this*, or *that Man*'s Way beſides, is to be employed in this or that Trade, according as he is fitted; the Husbandry, Merchandiſe, Mechanick or Liberal Arts; the Study of Phyſick, Law, Divinity, as his own Inclination and Capacity,

ty, and the Opportunity he has to attain any of these, shall direct. Tho we can-read it in the Faces of Children, yet their Humour and Carriage we may con-ture what they will be fit for.

Now whosoever takes a survey of the ture of Man, as he will discover it was Contrivance and Work of great Wis-m and Goodness; so from an Observa-n of the several Faculties and Capacities, linations and Appetites, Instinct and Sa-city of Mankind, he will conclude which the *Way in which he should go*, which is *Way of Man*, the Life that is suitable to a Nature as ours is: For, he will be ly resolved in this, that it must be the ural Exercise and Perfection of those wers, the filling those Capacities, in the suit of those Inclinations, the Regulati-and Satisfaction of those Appetites, the bservance of those Instincts, and giving d to such Presages and Conjectures as the nd by its Nimbleness and Sagacity ves.

If these be considered, 1. Severally and rt; 2. Jointly, as they are all united consisting together, they make up the hole human Nature. As they consist with, are in subordination to each other, they give us a clear view of the whole Way Life of Man, all that he was made for his great Creator.

That which will help us to a more distinct owledg of this, will be to compare our ture with the Brutish, which is below us,

and the Angelic, which is above us. We partake of both Natures, we have the Faculties and Appetites both of Angels and of Brutes.

From hence I infer, That if we live wholly as either meer Animals, or as pure Spirits, we live not agreeably to our Nature and State. We muſt, on the one hand, raiſe up our ſelves above the low Life of Senſitives; and yet we muſt not ſoar ſo high as the Life of Spirits deveſted of Fleſh and Blood. That Way is too low, and this too high; the Way of Man lies in the middle betwixt theſe two. We muſt not ſink down into, and yet we muſt comply with our earthly, fleſhly, animal State.

And indeed here is the great Difficulty, to ſee that theſe two Lifes do not claſh and interfere, but conſpire with, and be ſerviceable and friendly to each other, to bring down Heaven to Earth, and to advance Earth to Heaven, as much as is poſſible.

This is the Skill, this is *Wiſdom* indeed, that the Soul condeſcend to the Condition and Services of this lower Life of Fleſh and Senſe, and yet not loſe, not forgo its own ſpiritual Life. To come down from, and yet ſtill to be in Heaven, whilſt we are on Earth: To behave our ſelves like Men *in the Fleſh*, and yet at the ſame time to act as becomes thoſe who are endow'd with ſpiritual divine Souls; this is the way of Man, in contradiſtinction to the way or life of brute Animals.

Queſt.

Queſt. But how is this Life to be attained? What muſt we do, that we may neither ſink below our ſelves, and become Brutes, nor yet ſtretch our ſelves beyond our Line, and live like the Spirits, which are not in conjunction with earthly Bodies?

Anſw. Let us be in a ſincere and conſtant purſuit of that which is, and, when we are fitteſt to judg, we think to be *beſt*.

This will be as the Polar Star to direct our Courſe. If we mind this, we ſhall ſteer ſafely betwixt the two Rocks; we ſhall neither depreſs the Soul, nor neglect the Body: we ſhall advance Underſtanding and Liberty, and all the rational and higher Faculties. And this will be done without prejudice to Senſe, and the Animal Life and Powers.

If we conſtantly aim at doing that which is *beſt*, which is that to which by our very Natures we are framed, we ſhall then make more account of our Soul than of our Body, more account of Underſtanding, and Liberty, and Conſcience, than of Senſe and Animality; we ſhall bring the Body into ſubjection, and keep the Animal ſerviceable to the Mind. And when they are once come to this, (which is the true natural State, and tends to the preſervation and perfection of them both, as well as conduces to that of the World without) then the Intereſts are reconciled, they are all one, they com-

bine and conſpire together; the Soul makes much of its good Servant the Body, and the Servant is well-pleaſed with the Employment it is put to by ſuch a Maſter: Neither of them hinder other's attainment to its juſt perfection: but on the contrary, the Soul is helped and furthered by its Conjunction with the Body; and no Faculty of that, but ſhall one way or other become an Occaſion, and the Matter or Inſtrument of the Soul's Uſe, and thereby of the Enlargement of its Underſtanding, or Liberty, or Goodneſs.

Thus the Animal Life is not only conſiſtent with, but ſerviceable to the Life of Knowledg and Liberty, of Wiſdom and Vertue: And on the other hand, the Spiritual Life heightens and invigorates the ſenſible and animal: It *becomes Health to the Navel*, &c.

From all that I have hitherto ſaid, I may conclude, That Man's Way in general, or the Way in which all and every Man ſhould go, is ſuch an Exerciſe of his natural Powers, as either is their Perfection, or has a direct tendency to it, and is alſo in order to the perfection of all others, and will bring Honour to the great Author of them. This in general.

I ſhall now deſcend to a ſomewhat more particular Account of this Way; and ſhall mention,

Firſt, The Way of *Underſtanding*; when a Man's Reaſon preſides and governs, and all the other Faculties and Appetites are ſubject

ject and obedient to it. This is the truly natural Way; for the Understanding was made to be chief, and all else in Man to be inferior and subordinate. Consequently to this, and which is implied in it, is,

The *Way of Knowledg and Truth.* These are the Perfections of the Understanding, and without which it is no more fit to conduct and guide our Appetites, than an unlighted Candle is to give us light; or a Guide that is ignorant in the Way, is fit to direct us to our Journey's End. More particularly;

The Way of *Wisdom*, which is, our propounding to our selves good, and great, and attainable Ends, and pursuing them in the use of proper, and fit, and likely Means. This implies not only Knowledg, but Choice, and therefore contains in it the Will, as well as the Understanding; but yet all this is very reducible to that which I call the *Way of Understanding.*

I insist the rather on this, because *Understanding* is the greatest, highest, and most proper and peculiar Principle that is in Humane Nature, that which so remarkably distinguishes betwixt Man and Beast, and betwixt one Man and another: And because our Works are of no account, if they do not proceed from this; if they be done without it, they are not (as the Moralists call them) *humane*, not Works of *Men.* And the greater Perfection of the Understanding they arise from, the greater and better they are.

This then is the first particular Way, the Way of *Understanding*; when our Will, and all our Inclinations and Appetites, our inferior Powers, are under the Conduct and Government of true Knowledg, the true *Knowledg of Good and Evil*, which is the Principle of Wisdom, which is chiefly seen in preferring the better Good before the less, and in discerning the reference which one has to the other.

This Way of Understanding is that which the Sacred Scripture doth so often call on us to walk in, and bids us not be as the *Horse, and as the Mule, which have no Understanding, whose Mouth must be held with Bit and Bridle.* That which a Bridle is, to restrain and turn them hither and thither, that should our Understanding be to us. And how often is the good Way called the Way of Understanding? And they that walk not in this Way, are said to be *ignorant*, and such as *err in their Hearts*, and to be *foolish.*

2*dly*; I may here also mention the Way of *Voluntary Action*, the Way of *Self-determination* and *free Choice.* This is also natural to Man, not to be thrust and push'd on from Causes without; but Things must first approve themselves to his Understanding, that they are good; and when they appear so to him, whether he can refuse them or not, I list not here to dispute. All agree, that a Man can will nothing but under the appearance of *Good.* And this is certain, that the Perfection of the Will is, when

when it's under the guidance and ſuperintendance of the Underſtanding, when it can do nothing *againſt the Truth*, but with it, and *for it*, (if I may borrow that Phraſe.)

And this is a great Perfection of our Natures indeed, when our Appetites and Inclinations are ſo wholly ſwayed and determined by Reaſon and true Knowledg, that they are never carried to any things which that does not approve; there's a perfect Agreement, no Claſhings, no Oppoſitions. *To walk* in this *Way*, is to *ſhew our ſelves Men.*

But I proceed to more Particulars of theſe Ways, both of Nature in general, and of Underſtanding and Will in particular; and I will name only three.

1. The Way of *Religion* and Piety towards our God, and our Saviour, which in ſhort is, to believe, and love, and fear, and truſt, and obey God above all. And particularly, to believe, and love, *&c.* the only begotten Son of God, according to the Revelation made of him in the Goſpel.

2. The Way of *Righteouſneſs* and Goodneſs to our Brethren, to all Men: To be honeſt and juſt to every one, in giving him that which is his own, that is, that which he has a Right unto, either by the Law of Nature and Reaſon, or by the Laws of the Country, and Cuſtoms of the Place where we live: To do good to thoſe that have done good to us: To obey our Governors: To honour, *i. e.* to obſerve, and if they need

need it, to maintain our Patents: To provide for our Children, that they may live, and live well, and be happy: To deal fairly with Equals, and to be courteous to Inferiors: To keep Promiſe with them to whom we have made it: And to be good, to be benevolent and beneficial to all, eſpecially to the beſt, if they be indigent: To deſire and endeavour the Perfection and Happineſs of every one in the World; to *do good to all Men.*

3. The Way of *Sobriety*, by which I underſtand ſuch a Regulation and Government of our ſelves, in all we do and ſuffer, as is conſiſtent with the preſervation, and makes for the perfection of all our Faculties; or, if not of all, yet of the ſupreme and principal, and of the reſt, ſo far as conſiſts with the perfection of the higher.

We commonly call that *Sobriety*, which is the good Government of our ſelves, in Eating and Drinking, and ſome other bodily Pleaſures and Paſſions: And in ſum, when that about which we are converſant, is leſs conſiderable than our ſelves: which perhaps may imply thus much, that when we are converſant about that which is more conſiderable and valuable than we are, then we ought not to have ſuch regard to our own Preſervation and Perfection; but if we could produce any Effect which would be of greater worth than our ſelves, we ſhould do it, tho it were with the leſſening, nay, and loſs of others.

But

But when I ſay thus, I underſtand that of our ſelves, which can be hurt, and loſt in the doing of the greateſt good: which can never be imagined of the ſupream Faculties, for that's their Perfection.

The Perfection of the Soul is to know, and where it knows fully and adequately, it knows the Perfection of a thing, and what's in order to that, and then it wills and is affected, it is pleaſed with that, and deſires and endeavours it where it is not; the larger and greater the Soul is, the more it knows, and the more it wills and is pleaſed with the Perfection of more things.

And if this, if Truth and Goodneſs, or Knowledge, and Pleaſure in the good State of things, of all things, be the Health, the Strength, the perfection of the Soul; there is no fear that it can be hurt by theſe. It cannot be leſſened or impaired, much leſs loſt and deſtroyed by Truth and Goodneſs: But on the contrary, it is raiſed and perfected, is ſecured and advanced by them.

Our other miniſtring and inferiour Powers may be loſt and deſtroyed by this, but not our Governing and Supream, *i. e.* the Underſtanding and Will. Truth and Goodneſs are the very Life of the Soul, and as ſoon may Bodily Life kill the Body, as thoſe ſhall hurt the Soul.

Object. But may not this *Candle of the Lord* waſte it ſelf? The hotter and brighter the Fire burns, is it not the ſooner out? And may not the Soul neglect, and ſo damage, and at laſt deſtroy it ſelf, whilſt it is

ſo

ſo much taken up with other Objects? and patticularly finding ſomething greater and better than it ſelf, it may be ſo very much employed about that other thing, as wholly to diſregard it ſelf?

Again; *Seeing* is the Perfection of the Eye, but yet by looking on the Sun the Eye is blinded. And who knows but there may be Objects ſo tranſcendently glorious as to dazle and put out the Eye of our *Mind*: there may be ſo vaſt a diſproportion betwixt ſome Objects and theſe Faculties, that they may ſtretch them beyond their natural Tone, and ſo crack and break them. *Scrutator Majeſtatis opprimetur à Gloria.*

Beſides; Experience tells us, that if the Soul does not reflect and know it ſelf, and obſerve its actions, it is Imperfect, and in the way to Ruin.

Anſw. 1. All theſe Inſtances are of Bodies. Or 2. of the Soul as it depends on the Body. Or 3. if they be of the Soul conſidered in it ſelf: yet they will ſignify no more than this, that the Soul may be hurt and damaged by the knowledge of ſome Truths, or Delight in ſome Goods, but it will have a preſent ſence of it; as the Eye is dazled in looking on the Sun, and ſo will turn away it ſelf from that Object.

If my Obſervation be true, hitherto I never found my Faculties impaired by more clear and perfect knowledge of any thing, nor by delight in that, which I had a true knowledg of. But I have found my ſelf worſe for imperfect and obſcure Knowledg,

and

and for ſuch delight, as was founded in a Lie, or a Miſtake.

Indeed ſometimes the Purſuit of clear Knowledge, when it was not at all, or difficultly attainable, or when it was not of great uſe; and ſometimes the clear Knowledg I had of a thing has been the occaſion of detaining me from ſuch an Employment of my Underſtanding, or other Faculties, as was more neceſſary. So alſo Delight in, or Endeavour after this or that particular Good, may have hindred me from doing more or greater Good. But from all this I obſerve, that all the prejudice that is done me comes to this, that I am hindred from more Knowledg, or from delight in, and doing more Good.

Now I ſhall eſcape this danger, if I aim at all the Knowledg I am capable of, and take delight in the Good of all.

And if it ſo happen, that by this I ſacrifice my ſelf to the Common Good, I do but follow my natural Inclination; and it is much better to periſh in obeying, than to continue in oppoſing my Nature.

Tully ſomewhere ſays, *Life is not ſo dear, as that Affection of doing Good.* I add, that this is our very *Life*; and being ſo, I do not ſee how we can loſe or hurt our ſelves in complying with this Inclination. But I muſt not now purſue this matter any further.

To return to my main Argument. From all that I have ſaid, in Explication of what is the *Way* or Life of *Man*, it may appear, that

that that is called *his way*, which leads to that for which he was designed, *viz.* the Perfection, or good State of himself and others, and the Honour of God, which results from this: And consequently, that *Sobriety*, *Righteousness*, and *Godliness* are the Life of Man. These are the things for which Man was made, for these he has Faculties which fit, and Appetites which do incline him to them.

All I add farther to this is, That as we have distinguished the *way* of *Man* from that of Brutes, so we must put a considerable Difference betwixt the *Way* of a *Child* and that of a grown *Man*, and take due Care not to make the *Child* a *Man* too soon.

This may serve for Explication. I proceed now to some Considerations by way of Argument. And,

1. Let us consider the absolute necessity that every Man should understand his *way* of *Life*, and be exercised in it. This is necessary to his living well, to his present and to his future Happiness: Nor to his own only, but to other Mens also; as many as have relation to him, as are near him, are the better or worse for his being good or bad.

It's absolutely necessary, that every Man should know and do all that, which his great Creator design'd and made him for; else he is in vain, he will never attain his End. But that's not all, he will be miserable, he will not only fall short of God's End, but oppose it. He will be so far from being per-

fect

fect and happy in himſelf, and from contributing to the Perfection and good State of others, that he will be in a moſt forlorn Condition himſelf, and will help to undo his Fellow Creatures.

2. In an ordinary way, no Man comes to the Knowledg and Practice of what he ſhould do, unleſs he be firſt inſtructed and exerciſed in it.

I confeſs, God has given to Man ſuch a Mind, that it can teach it ſelf in ſome Caſes; but yet it is ſo made, that it muſt be excited, and ſome way aſſiſted by either the *Inſpiration* that gives Wiſdom, or by the Communication of Knowledg from wiſe Men, or by both; which is indeed the uſual way the Divine Providence takes with us; he inſtructs us by one another. St. *Paul* was ſent to *Ananias*, &c.

Where ever was the Man, that without exerciſing himſelf to Godlineſs, ſtarted up excellently good all on the ſudden? Goodneſs is no Muſhroom that grows up in a Night. It is not ſo natural, that it will come upon us, as our bodily Strength and Stature do, while we ſleep; but it's the Effect of Pains and Induſtry, of Care and Exerciſe.

By doing, Men come to better Underſtanding of what they ought to do, and alſo acquire a greater Ability and Readineſs to do it.

3. There's no better, no fitter time for Inſtruction and Exerciſe, than when we are young: then we are pliant and tender, as ſoft

ſoft Wax, which will eaſily receive an Impreſſion. Then we are not prepoſſeſs'd with Errors and inveterate Prejudices, we have no ill Cuſtoms to lay aſide.

Beſides; there can be no ſuch fit time of learning how to live, as at the beginning of Life. It's a fooliſh and vain thing to put this off to the laſt, as many do, who, when they are near an end of their Life, then are enquiring how they ſhould live.

And why will Men defer this till many Years of Life be ſpent? Why ſhould they be learning how to live, then when they ſhould be living? No, it behoves us to be inſtructed how to live, and to exerciſe our ſelves as we are taught, as ſoon as is poſſible: for otherwiſe our Life will paſs away unprofitably, at beſt it will be to no purpoſe, if it be not to ill purpoſe and miſchievous.

Theſe things conſidered, that it's indiſpenſably neceſſary for every one to underſtand his way, and to walk in it; and that no Man ordinarily comes to underſtand what he ought to do, and to do it without Inſtruction and Exerciſe, and that the firſt Time, the young Age is beſt for theſe Purpoſes. I now proceed to plead with Parents, and all that are appointed, and have taken on them the Inſtruction of *Children*, that they would not neglect this great Truſt. Nay, let me perſwade every one of you, who are come to underſtand this good way your ſelves, and to walk in it, that you would be aſſiſtant to Children. Inſtil good

Prin-

principles into their tender Minds, set good examples before them.

1. You that are Parents, consider this is expresly commanded in Scripture. Under the Mosaick Dispensation, *Deut.* 6. 6, 7. *These Words which I command thee shall be in thy Heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently* (shalt whet them upon) *thy Children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy House, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.* This was commanded the Jews by *Moses*, and less is not required of us by Christ. *Ephes.* 6. 4. *Ye Fathers provoke not your Children to Wrath,* (do not use the Power you have over them tyrannically, be not cruel, be not over severe) *but bring them up in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord:* In the Instruction and Discipline of Christian Religion.

Besides; the Wisdom of God in *Solomon* has from the Observation he has made, commended this Instruction and Discipline of Children to their Parents in many places; *Prov.* 29. 17. *Correct thy Son, and he will give thee Rest.* Chap. 23. 13. *Withhold not Correction from the Child; for if thou beatest him with the Rod he shall not die.* Chap. 19. 18. *Chasten thy Son while there is hope.* Correction and Chastening is one way of Instruction; and that which to a tender Parent is most difficult, and that is therefore so often mention'd, because they would be most prone to neglect it. Thus we find its commanded in the Scriptures, but that's not all. For,

2. In the ſame Holy Writings we find Obedience to it highly commended, and ſignalized as an Inſtance of great Goodneſs and true Religion: And it's repreſented as the way wherein a very great Bleſſing was conveyed: Gen. 18. 17, 18, 19. *God ſaid, Shall I hide from* Abraham *the thing which I will do, ſeeing (that* Abraham *ſhall become a great and mighty Nation, and all the Nations of the Earth ſhall bleſſed in him? for, I know him, that he will command his Children, and his Houſhold after him, and they ſhall keep the way of the Lord, to do Juſtice and Judgment; that the Lord may bring upon* Abraham *that which he has ſpoken of him.*

I beſeech you obſerve how great a Commendation God himſelf has given here of this, that *Abraham* would command *his Children and Houſhold after him to keep the way of the Lord.* How well, how kindly does God take this, that he was not only good and righteous himſelf, but would take care that his Servants, that his Children, and thoſe that were to live after him ſhould be ſo too?

And how is the Righteous God pleaſed to reward this Practice? He would hereupon diſcover to *Abraham, the great thing he was about to do.*

Nay, farther; It ſeems to be brought in here as a Reaſon, why all the World ſhould be bleſſed in *Abraham.* And indeed it was the means whereby that Bleſſing was conveyed to the World, *Abraham's* inſtructing his Children after him, tho at ſo great a diſtance from our Saviour, yet had an Influence

fluence on his coming among us. For ſo, after that God had ſaid, he would *command his Children*, &c. it is added, that *the Lord may bring upon* Abraham *that which he has ſpoken of him.*

Let this Conſideration prevail upon us, when we ſee God took ſuch notice of *Abraham*, and ſo bleſſed him for it. Let us not be content to be good alone, but endeavour that our Children may be ſo too.

3. Let us conſider other Examples, whom we cannot but think our ſelves bound to follow.

Joſhua 24. 15. *Chuſe ye whom ye will ſerve, but as for me and my Houſe we will ſerve the Lord.* This good Man will uſe the Authority which he had as the Maſter of his Family, to engage thoſe under him to walk in God's ways: The Maſter muſt according to this Example require his Servants, and the Father his Children, to *ſerve the Lord.*

And it's a remarkable Paſſage that we read of, Job 1. 5. *When the days of his Sons feaſting were gone about*, 'tis ſaid, *that* Job *ſent and ſanctified them: i. e.* required them to fit themſelves to joyn in offering up Sacrifice the next day: which Sanctification might be by Prayer and Faſting, and by abſtaining from other Enjoyments and Works which might unfit them for that Duty, *and roſe up early in the Morning*, (he was earneſtly ſet upon it) *and offer'd Burnt-Offerings according to the number of them all.* And why was all this Care taken? Why? To expiate the Sins which he thought they

might have committed. For *Job* said, *It may be they have sinned, and cursed God in their Hearts.* Not sure, but conjectured they might have sinned, *It may be*, &c. He feared that they had *cursed God in their Hearts.* Not blasphemed him with their Mouths, he did not distrust that, if he had, he would have took Cognizance of it probably; for, that was a Sin to be *punished by the Judg*, as he speaks of another Sin: But lest they might have some inward, unseen, irreverend Thoughts of God, he does all this: And *thus*, says the Text, *Job did continually.*

This then was one part of of *Job*'s Righteousness which God took so much notice of, and for which he had that Testimony from the Judg, that there was *none in all the Earth like to him, perfect and upright.*

We see how this good Man look'd on himself as concern'd and interested in his Children; and how he prays and sacrifices, that their secret Sins may be done away, and calls upon them to joyn with him: *He sanctified them.*

Let us look on our selves as concern'd in the Sins of our Families: We that are Governours of them, let it be our Care not only to keep our selves, but our Servants and Children from Sin: Let us not only repent of our own, but of their Transgressions, to which perhaps by our Neglects we have been accessory. Let us not stay till Sins break forth in outward Act, but watch the very first possible rise of them, and take them at the beginning, and prevent

their

their ever being brought forth; ſo ſhall we in this reſemble holy *Job*.

St. *Paul* tells us, 2 *Tim.* 3. 15. that *from a Child he had known the Scriptures*; his Grandmother *Lois*, and Mother *Eunice*, (of whom he ſpeaks, 2 *Tim.* 1. 5. that *Faith dwelt in them*) had, it ſeems, inſtructed him very early in the Sacred Oracles.

Theſe things were writ for our Example. Let us alſo inſtruct our Children in the Doctrine of Salvation, that Way of Life which is declared to us in the Goſpel. You ſee this was one of the Means that conduced to the making of *Timothy* a very good Man, and one whom God thought fit to uſe in the Government of his Church.

This leads to another Argument, which is:

4. The vaſt Benefits which probably will accrue by this Practice. It is a great Advantage to the Child it ſelf, it will be in all likelihood very advantagious to many others, his or her Family, the Neighbourhood in which they live, the Society, the Church or Kingdom, of which they are Members or Subjects: Much Good alſo may thereby redound to the Parent or Inſtructor, who took the care of educating the Child.

The Child it ſelf, by the Bleſſing of God upon this Method, and his Grace accompanying it, is made a good and vertuous Man or Woman; and by being thus early inſtructed and exerciſed in his Duty, continues in the practice of it all the days of

his Life, and after Death, enters into the Happiness and Joy of all good Men.

Thus the first Instructions are the Seeds of Holiness and immortal Bliss; they are the first Beginnings of everlasting Happiness; and of which when they come to be possess'd, they will look back on all the Series of Causes that brought them thither, and will discover, that the Care of their Parents and Instructors to teach them the good Way, and to engage them to walk in it, was one of the first and chief.

Every one that will consider, may understand *now*, how much he owes of all the Happiness he has and hopes for, to the early Instructions he had from his Parents: But then we shall see more clearly how all contributed to our Happiness; we shall then evidently discover, that our Education had a mighty Influence on it. Whatever Benefits Wife or Husband, Children or Servants, Neighbours or Strangers, Relations or Friends receive from any one's being good and vertuous, wise and holy, they are beholden for it in a great measure to the Care of Parents and Instructers, who saw to their first Education; for, in their first Years was laid the Foundation of all that Vertue and Goodness, which is afterwards built upon it. Then were sown the Seeds, which in after-Years grow up to Maturity, and bring forth those excellent Fruits. The Honesty, the Truth, the Justice, the Charity, the Humility and Meekness, the Sobriety and Temperance, the

Zeal,

Zeal, the Courage, the Fidelity, the Religion, and whatever 'tis that makes Men good and useful, received, if not its very first Beginning, (for that I suppose to be in the very Nature of Man, which he had from God) yet very necessary Supplies for its increase; this Education was, if not the Womb that bare, yet the Breasts that gave it suck.

And are not the Clemency, the wise and good Government of Princes, and the Loyalty and Peaceableness of Subjects, much owing to the Care that was taken of them in their first Time?

Thou that hast the Education of a young Prince, one who shall rule over many, committed to thy Charge, be faithful to thy Trust: for how knowest thou, but thou mayest do that now in the discharge of thy Office, for which Thousands will rejoice? Nay, let me say, thou knowest not, how poor and low soever now he is whom thou instructest, how great a Man he may be; and if thou dost thy Duty wisely and diligently, thou puttest him in a fair way to be so. And if this by the Divine Providence come to pass, what a Joy will this be to thee, to reap such an unexpected Fruit of thy Care! That the little Seed which thou sowedst, is grown up to be a great Tree, and then thy self mayest rest thy self under the shadow of it; for so many times it has been. Thou who rejoicest to see thy Corn, thy Plants grow, and come to perfection, and reapest the Fruits of them with glad-

neſs; how great muſt that Joy be, which thou wilt have in ſeeing the Child grow up to Wiſdom and Vertue, to be a good and a great Man. And for this I deſire you to conſider,

1. How many, who have been thus carefully and wiſely educated, have come to a moſt excellent State; and how naturally this early Inſtruction and Exerciſe tends to bring them to it; what a powerful Efficacy it has on them to make them good?

2. How few that have wanted it, have ever come to any thing? or at leaſt, how ſhort have they fallen of what others have been, and themſelves might have been?

Let Hiſtory, and our own Obſervation, aſſure us of the Truth of theſe two Particulars, and our Underſtandings will eaſily diſcover the Reaſon why it muſt be ſo.

1. Conſult your own Obſervation, and let your Experience ſhew you the Truth of this. Have you not known in your Time many who have been carefully educated, who have riſen from a mean low Condition to a moſt excellent Eſtate? They have come from poor and ignoble Parents, but they have brought both Riches and Honour into their Families; they have been advanced into very high Places in the State, or have been entruſted with the moſt ſacred Offices in the Church: And if you enquire into their firſt Years, you'll diſcern for the moſt part, if not always, that Care was taken in their Education, and ſomething was then inſtilled into them by Counſel

or

or Example: some little Grain of Mustard-Seed was then sown, which has grown up to be a Tree, and which not only themselves and Family, but the whole Church or Kingdom sit under its shadow with great delight, and reap the Fruit of it. View all the Steps by which these Persons are mounted to such an height above others, and you will find some of the lowermost were the Instructions of their tender Years. If you will diligently trace them back to their first setting out, you will observe that their Feet, when they were very little, went to the House of Instruction. And on the other hand, have you observed those who have not been instructed and disciplin'd in their first Age, to have become famously good Men?

Perhaps it will be here said, That there are Instances of those that were well educated, who proved very bad; and of those of whom no care was taken to instruct them, who came to be excellent Persons.

To this I reply,

1. That I never said, that Education of Children is all that is required to make them good Men. We must be careful of the *Youth*, as well as of the *Child*. And all that Care that Parents can possibly take, will not be sufficient, no, nor the Grace of God besides, without his own concurrence. If therefore when he comes to be under his own Conduct, and of his own Will to dispose of himself, and do what he pleases; if he reject the Counsel which has been given, and will venture himself on his own

own Inexperience, he can't escape falling into foolish and evil Practices.

2. I hope the Instances are not very many, in proportion to those who receive Benefit by their early Instructions, nor especially to them who for want of it become bad.

3. We ought to consider, whether they were *trained up in that Way they should go.* This is a very material Consideration, because I doubt there is a great and general Defect in our educating of Youth, in that their Morals are very little looked to in some famous Schools, insomuch that they have been too often Nurseries of Debauchery, instead of answering the great Ends for which they were appointed.

And as to those who have wanted Education, and yet become famous in their Generation:

1. I do not say, that this *Training* is absolutely and universally necessary to Goodness; but yet it is the ordinary Means, and generally necessary to this End. God is pleased sometimes to go out of these ordinary ways; but we must not therefore depart from them.

2. I dare say, the Instances are very rare.

3. We cannot be sure but some good Principles were cast into the Mind whilst it was tender, and it receiv'd impression from them. And I believe, if such Men that come to Greatness, will recount by what means they came to it, they will rehearse

to

to you the Saying of a Father, or Grandfather, or Master, the Example of some whom they took notice of, and that a generous Emulation was stirred up in them. And,

4. Themselves will own, that however well they do now, they might have done better, and been greater Men, if they had been fully and skilfully instructed in their first Years; and they would have attained to more Perfection of Goodness, they would have done well more easily, at least, they would have been longer good, and done less Evil than they have. Thus much our own Observation and Experience may have taught us. But for further Confirmation in this Matter,

2. Let us now consider the Times before we lived, and see whether History will not give Testimony to what I say, and furnish us with abundance of Examples of such as being well educated, have attained to a most excellent Condition, but is in a manner destitute of Instances of the other sort; or if there be one or two, they are recorded as singular Rarities, and are look'd on as Prodigies.

The holy Story will plentifully supply us with Examples of the Greatness to which they have come, who have been carefully educated, and for which the Divine Providence seems to have prepared them by such an Education.

I take notice, in the first place, of the Sons of that excellent Man, *Abraham*. Besides, (what we cannot but suppose) that the rest of his Sons were in good condition, *Ishmael* was the Father of twelve Princes; And we know how great a Man *Isaac* was, and he, undoubtedly, *walking in the Steps of his Father* Abraham, and taking the same care which he had done, in instructing, &c. left two Sons, who were the Fathers of two great People, the *Edomites*, and the *Israelites*.

Moses, whom God raised up to be a Deliverer of his People from their hard Bondage, and made him a Prince over them, was through the wise and wonderful Providence prepared and fitted for this high Employment, by the Education which *Pharaoh*'s Daughter gave him. And this Education was not to Sensuality or War, as might be imagined, if we should make a Conjecture from corrupt Times and vicious Courts; but such as might be expected in a Court where wise Men bore sway, and where Men were promoted according as they excell'd in Wisdom, as appears by *Joseph*; and accordingly it's said, *Acts* 7. 22. *And* Moses *was instructed in all the Wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in Words and in Deeds.*

Such an Education of a young Prince, is like the dawning of a bright Day; it's a hopeful Beginning, and promises well. Not but that sometimes it proves otherwise, as it was in *Nero*, who tho he was excellently

lently instructed by his Master *Seneca*, yet he became a most inhumane Tyrant, but it was after he had reigned five Years incomparably well, and he is represented by Historians as a Monster.

I say therefore, tho it come to pass, that one who had been well instituted in his Youth, may degenerate in his after-Time; yet we observe, that when God would raise up a mighty Prince for the deliverance of his People, his Providence makes way for this by his good Education: *He was instructed*, &c.

I need not mention *Samuel*, who was brought up at the Feet of *Eli*, to be a *Priest and Prophet of the Lord, and a Judg among the People.*

Nor of *David*, who very early understood not only the Martial Arts, but had attained great Skill in Musick and Poesy: And if he was instructed in these Curiosities and Ornaments, we can't think him deficient in the more substantial and necessary; I am sure he approved himself to understand his Religion to God, and his Duty to his Prince.

I must not so much as mention the *Schools* of the *Prophets*, wherein young Youths were trained up in such ingenious Ways, as fitted them for the reception of Divine Revelations; And out of these Schools, for the most part, the Prophets are supposed to have been taken. Let me give one or two Instances out of the New Testament, and the rather because 'tis said, that

they

they ſhall be all taught of God; which Expreſſion is ſo miſtaken by ſome, as that they make it an Excuſe for their own Neglect.

The great Apoſtle of us Gentiles was brought up at the feet of *Gamaliel*, a learned *Rabbi*; and the Divine Providence, which had ſo furniſh'd him with Learning, after made excellent uſe of him in the propagation of Chriſt's Goſpel.

Thus *Timothy* after him was promoted to an high Office in the Church: and he had been nouriſh'd up in the *Words of Faith and good Doctrine, and from a Child had known the Scriptures.*

The other Apoſtles of our Lord, however defective their firſt Educationn might have been, yet they had this Want ſupplied by three Years Converſation with our Lord; and after he left them, they were miraculouſly inſpired with the Spirit of Wiſdom.

And laſtly, which is very conſiderable, the bleſſed *Jeſus* himſelf was ſubject to his Parents, and went with them to *Jeruſalem* at twelve Years old, where he was amongſt the Doctors, and asked them Queſtions: He's ſaid to *grow in Wiſdom*, &c. and he grew by thoſe ways of Inſtruction, which were ordinary: His Parents directed, the Doctors informed him, by which he has honoured, and as it were conſecrated this Way, and has greatly commended it to us all. When the Son of God himſelf was train'd up in this way, whilſt he was young,

young, we ſhould all look on this Way, as the beſt Method we can take with our Children. And,

After this Example, I ſhall not need to mention any more; for this is ſufficient to convince us of the Goodneſs of this Way, and that 'tis ordinarily neceſſary to fit Men for any high Place.

But if we aim at no more for our Children, than ſo much Wiſdom and Goodneſs, as will qualify them to diſcharge themſelves faithfully and honeſtly in any ordinary way of Life; yet neither is this to be expected ordinarily, unleſs they be inſtructed, and principled, and exerciſed to it in their firſt Age.

Of this we may be further ſatisfied, if we take notice how it is with us all in other Matters. Does any one come to great Skill in his Profeſſion and Trade, to which he has not been bound Apprentice in his younger Years? Or, if ſome few do, yet nevertheleſs the other is the common way of Men. And we look on the tender Age, as the proper Time of beginning to learn any thing; and that if we do not inure our Children betimes, they will be in great danger of miſcarrying.

And if it be ſo in all things elſe, why ſhould it not hold in the matter before us? Is it becauſe Vertue is not difficult? or that Inſtitution and Exerciſe, the common way of attaining to other things, are not the means of acquiring this? Or, is it becauſe we think Children uncapable of ſuch Principles? But none of theſe are true; and there-

therefore, if we do wisely in binding those that are young to Trades, putting them betimes into this or that Employment, which we would have them follow, and come to the Mastery in, we shall also do no less wisely, to bind them out betimes Apprentices to Vertue and Goodness, which is the *Way* of them, and of all Men. And if we do not this, we do not act uniformly, we contradict our selves, and do not that in one Case, which we approve in all other, tho there be no difference.

I now speak of Education in general, and that which I say is, Let your Children be taught something or other, that they may be fitting themselves against they be Men, to be employed in some way that will be beneficial to themselves, and the Publick. That I might the more effectually perswade you to this, I have appealed to your own Observation, and to ancient History, whether this be not the only likely way to make good and useful Men; I will now offer you Reason why it must be so.

Young tender Minds are more apt to receive Impression, and to retain those that are made them afterward; the Reason of which I take to be this, that they are more vacant to attend, they are not prepossess'd with, nor so fixedly busy about, nor intent on other things; those Impressions that get first possession, keep it, the Experience of Mankind does attest this.

Qne

Quo semel est imbuta recens servabit odorem
Testa diu.

And it is semblably in other sorts of Creatures, both Animals and Plants, they are all, we know, more teachable and more pliant at first than afterwards.

This may convince us of the Necessity of teaching them betimes that which we would have them understand perfectly.

Let me add this, That our Minds come to Knowledg gradually; that there is no one way of Life, but there are many things to be known before we comprehend it fully; that this requires Time and Trial, that therefore we should begin early.

But besides Knowledg, Practice is required; and to be doing, is the way to do well. Now to begin betimes to do what we would do perfectly, is very necessary, because we shall be sooner accustomed to it, and be kept from accustoming our selves to other things: For, 'tis observable, that fewer Actions shall habituate a Child to any Practice, than a grown Man. It sooner and easier becomes a Custom, if it be begun in tender Years, than at full Growth; as you can easily with a hand bend a Plant, when a Tree will not yield to all your Might.

But this is sufficient to give you a view of the Reason why it is so, which your own Thoughts may easily trace further.

I will now diſmiſs this Argument, by which I hope, as many as will attend to what either themſelves obſerve, or is obſerved in Hiſtory, will be perſuaded to look well to the Education of their Children, becauſe according to all Obſervation, (and that not without good reaſon to ſecond it) this is the only ordinary way to make them good and uſeful. Would you have your Children come to good? would you have them uſeful in their place in ſome way or other? This is the only Method in which you can probably expect it; take care of them in their firſt Time; ſee to their Inſtruction and their Practice in their tender Years.

If we had no ſuch Aſſurance of the Likelihood of this our timely Care, to produce ſuch great Effects; yet the very Apprehenſion, that it is meerly poſſible for ſo much Good to come of it, ſhould methinks engage us to make the Experiment; and we can't doubt the Poſſibility, when we have Examples before our Eyes what has been done. And if this be ſo, what manner of Parents, what kind of Men are thoſe, that are not moved with ſo fair a proſpect of ſo much Good, of ſo many and great Benefits, as may come to their Child or Scholar, to themſelves, to their whole Family, the Town and Country where he was born, the Church and State of which he is a Member?

Would ye not have your Children to be good and uſeful, to enjoy Wealth and Honour amongſt Men on Earth, and to find

Mercy

ercy with God at the great Day, and to happy for ever? Surely there's none ſo id of natural Affection, as not to deſire is? But why then do you not endeavour it may be thus with them? Why do not, as much as in you lies, form them all that Wiſdom and Vertue whilſt they tender, which is ſo abſolutely neceſſary ſuch a Life and State? Do you not de- that they ſhould be a Shelter and Stay your old Age, and that you may at your ter End receive Comfort and Joy from em? If you do not, you do not make at proviſion for your own Content, which wiſe Forecaſt would put you upon, you wanting to your ſelves: And if you ire and hope to receive Benefit from em when they are Men, you ſhould take eat care to inſtruct them in, and inure em to their Duty while they are Children. Would you ſee them rich and great, and e it ſaid of them, that they were great efactors to the Town and Country ere they lived? Would you ſee ſome of r Poſterity in Eſteem for giving wiſe nſel to the King, or for being advanced the higheſt and moſt ſacred Offices, and charging them prudently and faithfully? ely this is deſirable to every Man, and if do deſire it, why do ye not do what you n for attaining it? Why do ye not ſow e ſeeds of Wiſdom and Goodneſs in this ound when it is firſt broke? You know t but it may make ſuch an Increaſe as , and bring forth a Thouſand-fold.

To conclude this; We that are Parents and Inſtructors, have ſuch a fair proſpect of ſo much Good that may accrue to our Children, to our ſelves, to the Society of which they are Members, by their being wiſe and good, that if we be not by this moved to do all we can to make them ſuch, we are neither ſo good to them, nor wiſe for our ſelves, nor do we ſtudy and ſeek the Publick Benefit as we ought. If this Argument will not prevail, let me offer another.

5. The very great Danger your Children are in, of being fooliſh and vicious, miſchievous, or uſeleſs in this Life, and unhappy in the future.

As I argued before, That all Men that are born into this World are in capacity of doing great Good, and of being uſeful and excellent Perſons; of glorifying God, by attaining to that Perfection which he deſigned them, and by contributing towards the Welfare of their Fellow-Creatures; and of enjoying that ineffable and unconceivable Bliſs, which remains for the Obedient in the other World: (And the Conſideration of this ſhould move any one, that has the Faith of a Chriſtian, or but the Underſtanding and Heart of a Man, to give all the help and aſſiſtance he can to his Children, that they may be as good and happy as they are capable of being; that they may not fall ſhort of that moſt excellent Condition, which our great and good Creator intended us all: and conſequently, that they ſhould take great care of inſtructing and diſciplining

plining them in their first Years.)

So I now engage you to use the same Care, from a Consideration of the great Dangers in which every one is, that comes into the World.

Man is in such a Condition, that as he may be raised up to Heaven by Wisdom and Goodness, and be exalted to such a State, that he shall be but very little lower than the Angels of Glory; so by Folly and Vice, and Neglect of himself, he may sink so much below his kind, that he may in nothing excell the Brutes; nay, he may degenerate into a Devil, may hate God, and live in perpetual opposition to Reason, and all the Principles of Goodness. He may do no Good, but much Evil here on Earth, being an Enemy to God and his Creation; and when he goes from the Earth, he shall go into the Torments of Hell.

This may be the sad Condition of thy Child: and is there not very great danger it should be his Condition, and that because of that *Body of Death*, which he here carries about with him, that fleshly Part, which is so heavy a Weight, that it depresses the Soul, when it would be on the Wing in pursuit of Truth and Goodness? How are we apt to be deceived, and think this part of us our whole, or at least our best selves? Again; What powerful Sollicitations do we meet with from the Enticements of Men? How do they, by specious false Reasonings, and many great Examples, seduce us out of the Way of Holiness? And how

busy is the subtil Serpent to insinuate his Tentations, where-ever he observes the least disposition, taking all Advantages from our Temper and Condition, to make us chuse to be wicked, and so to make us inevitably miserable.

And if this be the Case of all our Children, as certainly it is, that they are in so very great danger of such dreadful Evils; we shall be most inhumane and mercilefs to them, if we do not what in us lies to prevent their Ruin. We shall shew our selves stupid, if we do not, as soon as they are capable of Instruction, principle them against all Vice and Wickedness, by shewing them what is good; engage their Wills to like and chuse it, and put them on the doing it; and by all means to preserve them from Sin, and secure them from the Snare of the Devil.

It may be, some may not be much concerned whether their Children be good or great, they may have no desire they should be eminent: But can any of you be content they should become Beasts? You do not aspire at their doing much Good; but are you satisfied they should do none, nay, that they should do Evil? You care not they should be famous for good and brave Actions; but are you willing they should be infamous Villains, and live and die as *Evil-doers?* And tho you never once think that your Children should be raised up to the pitch of Angels; yet surely none of us but should be very fearful they should become

come Devils. None of us would be Parents of a Beaſt, or of a Devil: And yet our Children are in danger of being ſuch; and if we take no other care of them, but to bring them into the World, and to maintain the Animal Life, we put them into that Condition, that they muſt (without a very extraordinary Aſſiſtance of God's Grace) be ſuch. We have but by this brought them into Danger.

This World is a vaſt and howling Wilderneſs: And how mercileſs would that Father or Mother be, that ſhould bring a little Child, a young unexperienced Youth, amongſt the both wanton and ſalvage Beaſts, and leave him to ſhift for himſelf? Thus does every Father and Mother, that takes no care to inſtitute their Children in the *Way of Life*.

If therefore you be ſo low-ſpirited, as not to deſire your Children ſhould be in the beſt; yet ſure none can be willing they ſhould be in the worſt ſtate of which they are capable. If you would not have them holy and happy, as Saints and Angels; yet neither would you have them without Underſtaning, *as the Horſe and the Mule*, nor without Goodneſs, as the *Devil*. You would neither have them wicked, nor miſerable; and if you would not, you muſt take care to inſtruct and exerciſe them betimes in the *Way they ſhould go*.

Our Saviour ſays of *Judas* that betray'd him, *It were good for him if he had not been born*; It was far more eligible for him ne-

ver to have been, than to have committed ſo great a Wickedneſs: And is not this the hapleſs State of many more? So that they who are, with and under God, the Authors, or rather Inſtruments of *Life* and *Being* to any, do by this make them liable to great Miſery, as well as capable of great Happineſs.

And indeed thoſe Parents, who have done no more for their Children, than to bring them into the World, and make proviſion for the Animal Life only, I queſtion whether by this they have not done more to bring them into great Miſery, than they have contributed toward their Happineſs.

6. This leads me to another forcible Motive to take care of their Education, becauſe if we do not, we ſhall be acceſſory to all the Evil they both do and ſuffer. It will be Trouble enough to think, we have thoſe ſprung from us, who have been the Authors of great Miſchief to others, and fall into uttermoſt Ruine themſelves, tho our ſelves had no hand in it. That thoſe that came from, and are as it were parts of us, are moſt juſtly ſentenced to endleſs Torments; this thought is almoſt unſupportable to a Parent: But what will it then be to make this bitter Reflection, All this Ill that my Child has done, and all the Miſery he endures, is the Effect of my Negligence; it's through my faulty Careleſneſs, that he was ſo ſinful, and is ſo wretched?

If the Happineſs of Heaven admit of Allays, as it does of Degrees, the Remembrance

brance that I did not do my utmoſt to reſcue any of my Acquaintance and Friends from Sin, will give a great damp to the Joy of that State: But that I ſhould be ſo groſly negligent of mine own Child, as not to do all I could to prevent ſuch unſufferable Woes; this muſt pierce the Soul.

Laſtly then, Let all Parents conſider what account they will be able to give of themſelves to their Judg, of the Neglect of their *Children*: When they ſee them doom'd to everlaſting Miſery for that Wickedneſs they fell into for want of *timely Inſtruction*: When God ſhall ſay, theſe my Creatures are loſt for ever through your Heedleſneſs and Unfaithfulneſs, becauſe you neglected the Opportunities you had of principling and exerciſing them to Vertue and Godlineſs, they fell into a vicious Courſe of Life, and muſt now eat the bitter Fruits of it eternally. What will you then anſwer to your Judges? And with what face will you look upon thoſe your neglected Children, when they ſhall ſay, O had you but call'd on us *to remember our Creator in the Days of our Youth*, we had then been kept from *Iniquity*, and now from unconceivable Miſery? Had you but watched us at firſt, and been careful to engage us to Goodneſs, we had lived good Lives on Earth, and now have been happy in Heaven? Conſider, I beſeech you, how you will be then affected, and let this make you wiſe to prevent that Aſtoniſhment and Confuſion of Face, which muſt neceſſarily accompany ſuch a Guilt as this.

And

And that you may be able to know how you will be able to abide the Judgment of God, I would desire every one of us to summon our own Souls before themselves, and see what account they are able to give themselves of this most grievous Omission. What will the guilty Offender say to such Questions as this, which his awakened Conscience will put to him ?

1. Why hast thou been so unnatural, as not to desire and endeavour thy Child's best State ? Or, why hast thou been so unwise, as to slip the fittest, if not only Season thou canst ever have, to do him the greatest Good ? How is it that thou didst not go to the brute Creatures, and learn this of them, who as soon as ever their young Ones are capable, fail not to shew them how they must live ?

2. Again ; How foolishly hast thou acted, and contradicted thy self, in providing carefully a vast Estate for a Swine to wallow in ? for thou hast taken no care to fit him for it, to teach him to use it. And how careful hast thou been of thy young Dogs, that they be made ; and of thy Horses, that that they be managed ? But only thy Sons and thy Daughters are not regarded.

3. And then, was it not most fit and equal, that thou who hadst brought thy Children into Being, shouldst take all possible Care that they may live well, and be happy ?

4. Thou

4. Thou haſt done ſomething for them, then thou ſhouldeſt either have done more, or nothing. Better it were for them not to have been, than to be miſerable: They had better never have lived, than fall ſhort of the End of Life.

What Anſwer canſt thou make to ſuch Queſtions as theſe, which thine own Mind will put, if thou giveſt it leave to think? Or, how art thou ſatisfied with thy ſelf, when ſuch Thoughts as theſe ariſe in thy Mind?

And if thou canſt not ſtand before thine own Conſcience, how wilt thou appear before the Tribunal of the Great God?

I conclude this Exhortation. What would you ſay of a Father and Mother, that ſhould expoſe a new-born Infant in a Wilderneſs full of Salvage Beaſts? Would you not call this moſt unnatural Inhumanity? It would be ſo. And it is not leſs, but more Inhumanity, to leave the Soul of thy Child untaught, undiſciplin'd, to be a Prey to that roaring Lion: In the one the bodily Life is in danger; in the other, the higher Life of the Soul, the Spiritual and Eternal, is hazarded. Thou who takeſt no care of thy Child's Education, expoſeſt him to Eternal Death and Miſery.

How

How mercileſs and unnatural would that Mother be thought, who ſhould deny her Breaſts to the *hungry Child*, who could ſee it ſtarve without giving it *neceſſary Food?* She would deſerve to be branded for a Monſter. And what ſhall we think of thoſe that ſtarve the better and higher Life? That hear the Cries of the little Soul after Knowledg and Goodneſs, but turn a deaf Ear to them, and never once take care to nouriſh them up to Eternal Life, but ſuffer them to faint, and die the worſt of Deaths, that of the Soul.

And if Murderers of the lower Life ſhall be puniſh'd ſo ſeverely: if thoſe that, when they have wherewith to do it, deny to feed the hungry animal Life, ſhall not be able to ſtand in Judgment before God: how then ſhall the Murderers of Souls be avenged? and where ſhall they appear, that have denied the Bread of Life to their own Children?

It's an inhuman thing counted, not to ſhew the Way to an ignorant Traveller: but O how monſtrouſly unnatural is it, when the Soul of thine own Child is calling to thee by its Inclination, and its Neceſſities cry to thee, to ſhew it its *Way of Life*; when it ſtands gazing, and knows not which way to go, that thou ſhouldeſt not by thy Counſel and Example ſay to it, *This is the Way, walk in it.*

The Sum of theſe Arguments is, That if we will not tranſgreſs the expreſs Law of God;

God; if we think our ſelves bound to follow the Examples of good Men; if we will obey God in an Inſtance where Obedience has procured moſt ſingular Bleſſing; if either the Senſe of what's juſt and fit, or the Deſire of Benefit and Advantage will prevail with us; if we either love God, or our ſelves, or our Children; if we either follow the Inclinations of Nature, or the Directions of Reaſon; if we will be concluded either by the common Senſe of Mankind, or the Divine Oracles; if we would ſecure our Souls from the Guilt of inhuman, unnatural Cruelty, and our Children from the greateſt Miſery, We muſt take care to *train them up betimes in the Way in which they ſhould go.*

OF HOSPITALITY.

Preach'd to the Company of Inn-holders.

ROM. 13. 12. *latter part.*

Given to Hoſpitality.

THE Occaſion of our preſent Aſſembly, as I am informed, is to fulfill the Will of Mrs. *Anne Aſtel*, who having bequeath'd a yearly Revenue toward the Maintenance of a *Lecturer* in the Pariſh of St. *Lawrence Jury*, out of good

good respect she had to the *Worshipful Company of Inn-holders*, obliged that her *Lecturer* once a Year to preach a Sermon to them: In which she shewed her self a prudently pious and charitable Person, that when she had taken care for the good Instruction of her own Parish, she would improve and extend her Charity to others, and make it as diffusive as she could, that others, and particularly *You*, to whom she seems to have had particular Good-will, might partake of her Bounty.

That we might perform the Will of this religious and good Person, we are here assembled; and that you may receive that Benefit which she piously design'd, I have chosen to discourse of a Text of Scripture, the Consideration of which will set before you a great part of the particular Duty of *Inn-holders*, whose Name this Company bears.

And that I look on as the main Business of Sermons, and such Exercises as these, to put Men in mind of, and persuade them to the faithful discharge of their respective Duties; which when in all our several Places, Stations, and Employments we shall faithfully do, then, and not till then, shall we all be happy, and *Glory shall dwell in our Land.*

To make way for what I intend: The Word φίλοξενία, which the Translators here render *Hospitality*, is compounded of two Words, which signify Love of Strangers; and in its common use, it doth not much

much depart from this Signification that's imported in the Original.

The more ſimple word ξενία hath the ſame Senſe; only leaves us to gueſs what Affection or Deportment we ſhould have to Stangers, which is expreſt in the Compound.

The other word διώκοντες, which we here tranſlate *given to*, more properly ſignifies, and in other places is rendred *following*. It denotes the ſtudy of, and earneſt purſuit after a thing. So that the Senſe of the Apoſtle's Exhortation to the *Romans*, and to us, and all Men, as well as to them, is, that they and we ſhould diligently and ſtudiouſly, with Care and Pains, Earneſtneſs and Induſtry, ſet our ſelves to exerciſe Hoſpitality.

Concerning which I ſhall endeavour to ſhew three things in general.

Firſt; What that is which is here ſignified to us by Hoſpitality.

Secondly; How good and neceſſary it is. From whence it will appear that there is an Obligation on all Chriſtians, nay on all Men to practiſe it.

And having done this, I ſhall proceed to ſhew that *you* eſpecially of all Men are moſt peculiarly and moſt ſtrictly bound to be hoſpitable.

And here I ſhall diſcourſe of the Benefits that will redound to thoſe that carefully and conſcionably practiſe this Duty; likewiſe I will mention ſome of thoſe

Practices which are notorious Violations of the Laws of Hoſpitality. And ſhall alſo offer ſome Directions, which may help to the better Performance of it.

Firſt, In general; To have ſuch Affections, ſuch inward Diſpoſitions toward *Strangers*, as are fit for us to have, is to be *hoſpitable*: and to carry and demean our ſelves toward them in a becoming manner, is to exerciſe Hoſpitality.

This is all that's imported by the word *Hoſpitality*, which is originally Latin; or by the Greek ξενία, which denotes that inward Affection, or outward Deportment that ſhould be towards Strangers.

And if the generality of Mankind were asked what that is, they would anſwer, that it is to be juſt and honeſt, faithful and true in our Dealings with them. 'Tis to be civil, courteous, humane, loving, kind in our Diſpoſition and Carriage. 'Tis to be inclin'd and ready to do all Good Offices for them, that are in our Power, which their Condition calls for, and which they either do, or, if they underſtood, would deſire: That is, to inform them when they are ignorant, to rectify their Miſtake, to aſſiſt them in the Government of their Paſſions about thoſe matters with which they are unacquainted. To withhold them what in us lies, from doing any fooliſh evil Actions, to which their Unexperience might betray them. To ſupply them with thoſe things, of which, by reaſon of their Abſence from

from their Acquaintance, they are deſtitute.

In ſhort, It is to bail and ſcreen them from that Evil, and thoſe Miſchiefs, and Dangers to which, by being Strangers, they are expoſed: to ſecure them from all that Harm, to which their Condition makes them liable; and to do all that Good to, and confer thoſe Benefits on them, which, if they were where they are known, they might expect and would have.

It is to be their Friends, to do them any good Office that they want and we can do; civilly to converſe with them, to adviſe and counſel, to relieve with Money or any other way, to entertain them at our Table, to lodg them; and to do this with a willing Mind and a chearful Countenance, which is more than a Circumſtance in this matter; for this hoſpitable Look (if I may ſo call it) is no ſmall part of the Behavior, that's intended in *Hoſpitality*.

And tho in our modern uſe of it, the Word imports no more than an entertaining a Perſon with whom I have no great Acquaintance at my Table, and lodging him; yet anciently it ſignified all ſorts of Civility and Kindneſs, which is ſhewn to Stangers.

So that this is the Sum of vvhat I mean by *Hoſpitality*, to be *kind and friendly to Strangers*. I proceed,

Secondly; To make it appear that this is very good: That is,

1*st*, It's fit and becoming.
2*dly*, It's profitable and advantageous.

1*st*, It's a piece of that *good Nature*, which so well becomes Man, that it is called *Humanity*: and therefore the Ancients call our Kindness to Strangers by this Name, *Humanity*; and the defect of this is ever censured by them with this Expression of *Barbarous* and *Inhumane*.

And we have further Reason to think this good Nature, if we consider the natural and good Principles of our Actions, *viz.* That we are naturally compassionate and inclined to relieve those that are in want; that we are pleased to see others in good State; that we think we ought to *do to others, as we would have them do to us*.

These and such like are the Principles of our Actions, and they are acknowledged by most to be both natural and good. Now, if we will follow these, we must be good and kind to Strangers; for, we shall consider, they are absent from their Acquaintance and Friends, and that they want their Help; we shall, out of the Pleasure we have to see Men in a good Condition, do what in us lies, to bring them into it; we shall think, if our selves were in the same case they are, what we should desire of others, and we should do to them, as we desire they should to us.

2. The holy Scriptures give us full proof of this, and they being an express Declaration

tion of God's Will, do not only declare, but make a thing fit.

Now in the Bible how expreſly is *Hoſpitality* injoyned? How often inculcated? How much commended? And how ſeverely is the very neglect of it cenſured and puniſhed?

1. The ancient People of God, the Jews, are in moſt plain Words commanded to uſe Strangers well; not to oppreſs, no nor to vex them, but to love them as themſelves: Exod. 22. 21. *Thou ſhalt neither vex a Stranger, nor oppreſs him; for ye were Strangers in the Land of* Egypt. Exod. 23. 9. Levit. 19. 34. *And thou ſhalt love the Stranger as thy ſelf; for ye were Strangers in the Land of* Egypt. And many other places. And theſe Commands are back'd with a moſt forcible moving Reaſon, *viz.* that themſelves *were Strangers in the Land of* Egypt; and they knew the *Hearts of Strangers:* they are put in Mind of the Condition they were once in, and what Uſage they then wiſhed for from the *Egyptians.* And this reaſoning ſuppoſes they would now deal with others, as themſelves once wiſhed they might be dealt with.

Nor is the Chriſtian Law defective in this: For, as we are here in the Text exhorted to *follow earneſtly after Hoſpitality*; ſo in *Heb.* 13. 2. we are caution'd *not to forget it*; which ſuppoſes that Chriſtians are otherways, both by Nature and the former Revelations, taught to do thus.

2. This is highly commended to us from the greatest Examples. It is recorded to have been the Practice of *Abraham*, and of *Lot*, Men beloved of God, and famous with us; they were not only honoured whilst they lived, but they are renowned amongst all Posterities.

Gen. 18. 1, 2, 3, to the 11th: In this Story is observable what *Abraham* did, and with what Heartiness, and Alacrity, and Diligence he entertained them; how free he was in it: he asked them not, but they him, this was a Carriage that became the hearty Goodness of those old Times, and 'twas a Work worthy of, and suitable to the great Faith of that excellent Man.

In the beginning of the 19th Chapter we have *Lot's* Hospitality recorded, when he saw two *Strangers he went to meet them, bowed himself with his Face toward the Ground*; address'd to them with all obliging Civility. He would not be denied, but when they said, they would tarry in the Streets all Night, he importuned them to come in; and when they were come in, he entertain'd them bountifully; *he made them a Feast*, saith the Text.

Nay, in the 10th of *Deut.* 28, 29. *God* himself is said to *love the Stranger*, and *give him Food and Raiment*. But we have far greater proofs of God's Love to Strangers than these: For *Us* Gentiles, that were *Strangers* and *Foreigners*, hath he *visited with his Salvation*; to us he hath given his Son, and hath treated us with all imaginable Expressions

pressions of Kindness and Love, nay beyond all Imagination.

Now, if this be the Practice of the best Men that ever lived, nay, of God himself; if this be one of his Titles, that he *loves the Stranger*, as it was of the Heathen *Jupiter*, who was called *Jupiter Hospitalis*, the Hospitable God, the God of Strangers: then surely we must conclude Hospitality to be a fit and becoming thing.

3. The Scriptures shew this Practice not only to be good and fit, but necessary and indispensable; which will appear from the sad Doom that shall pass upon them who but neglect this. See *Mat.* 25. 43. *I was a Stranger, and ye took me not in.* This was part of their Charge, who are sentenc'd to everlasting Flames; that he, that is, the least of our Lord's Disciples, was not taken in when a Stranger.

He doth not say, ye scorn'd, ye revil'd, ye persecuted me *when I was a Stranger*; but *ye took me not in.* Nor is their Fault, that they did not entertain the Christians they knew, and were acquainted with; but that they did not receive into their Houses those whom they *knew not.*

This certainly is a great and necessary Duty, which the Judg of all the World thinks fit to mention, where he hath declared the Process that shall be at the last Judgment; he hath not instanced in many others that we esteem (but several are not) greater than this.

Thirdly; To the Scriptures, I might add by way of Accumulation, the Teſtimony the Heathens have given to this hoſpitable Temper and Practice, and this both by their Sayings and their Examples: Which muſt have the force of a convincing Argument; for it is ſo manifeſtly good and becoming, that by the dim Light of Nature they could diſcover it.

Homer in the third Book of his *Odyſſes*, brings in *Neſtor* importuning *Minerva* and *Telemachus*, to ſtay with him. He tells them, they leave him as if he had no Entertainment for them; or that he could not lodg them: but this he would never ſuffer as long as he liv'd, or kept a Servant, ξείνος ξενίζειν, whoſoever ſhould come to his Houſe.

This ſhews what Hoſpitality they uſed, and what they thought of it in thoſe old Times.

Again, The *Thynians* and other Nations, which were look'd on as barbarous, yet were famous for their kind Uſage of Foreigners, as is obſerved by Hiſtorians.

The *Cretians* amongſt others, are obſerved by *Athenæus* to have two Tables, which were called ξενικαὶ, *i. e.* for Strangers.

This was of great account amongſt the *Romans*, who thought it a moſt inhumane thing, *Uſu Urbis prohibere Peregrinos*, as *Tully* ſaith.

And indeed nothing was more deteſtable amongſt all the Heathens, than not to be civil to Strangers. *Inhoſpita littora*, *Populus* ἄξενος, were Appellations of the worſt ſound in their Ears. But

But I must not now give any account of the manner how this was practis'd, and into how great a Friendship this Kindness to Strangers grew, how sacred a thing it was; and how the Host and Guest received Tallies, little Monuments of that Friendship they had contracted, which were delivered from Father to Son. And if ever this Friendship were violated, they invoked their *Jupiter Latialis.*

The *Romans* had such a regard to those Guests that were Friends, that as *A. Gel. lib.* 5. *cap.* 13. in his Description of the Order of Offices, saith; after Parents, and Orphans, and Clients, they were to have the next place, and to be set before Kindred, whether *Consanguinei*, or *Affines.*

And the *Jus Hospitii* was by all look'd upon as a most sacred thing. *Tull.* 3. *Offic. Cum Tyane Patrensi est mihi quidem Hospitium vetus, quam ego necessitudinem sanctè colendam puto.*

This is sufficient to shew that Hospitality is a fit and becoming Practice.

Secondly; I now shall shew that this Practice is very beneficial, and indeed so is every thing that is fit and becoming.

1. It's beneficial to the kind Host: See the Recompence *Abraham* and *Lot* had: the one had a Child given him in his old Age, the other was rescued out of the Flames of *Sodom.* These Blessings were bestowed upon them, upon their kind Entertainment of Strangers. Some, saith the Scripture, in

in so doing have *entertained Angels unawares*; and I doubt not, but great Blessings have been left behind Guests, that were not Angels.

In the 28*th* of *Acts*, ver. 7. *Publius* is said to have entertained *Paul three days courteously*, φιλοφρόνως ἐξένισε, and this kind Guest in requital heal'd his Father-in-Law of a Fever.

But besides all this; He that is a kind *Host*, does that which most directly tends to his own Perfection: For, whosoever goes in the ways of Love and Kindness, is in the Road to Happiness. He, by doing that which is agreeable to Humane Nature, highly pleases and delights himself: Besides, he takes the best course that can be, to make a sure Friend: The Kindnesses shew'd to Strangers will never be forgotten by them. Now I suppose we all know, that a *Friend* is the greatest Treasure on Earth; next to the Goods within, there's nothing in the World comparable to it.

2. I need not discourse how profitable this is to the Guest or Foreigner; for 'tis plain that he is reliev'd, he's serv'd, he's gratified, he's pleas'd.

And besides this Service done to private Interests, the Welfare of the Publick is many ways promoted: for good *Hospitality* encourages Men to go abroad, this increases Commerce, and gives an Opportunity of making the Good of one Nation common to others. What an Advantage was the Dispersion of Christians to the whole World?

World? And what a publick Benefit would it be, if the Men of all Countries were by kind and friendly Treatment invited into all Countries? How ſhould we grow acquainted, and learn to bear with, if not to like one anothers Manners: And this would increaſe firſt into Private, and then Publick Friendſhips.

Enough I think is ſaid to ſhew, that Hoſpitality is exceeding good. And from what hath been ſaid, appears the great Obligation, under which all Men are, to be kind to Strangers. I do not ſay they are all bound to relieve them with Money; for many are poor and have it not: but I ſay all ought to be kind, and expreſs their Kindneſs in the ways they can, that is, as far as they are able, and as is conſiſtent with other greater Duties.

All can be hoſpitable, tho they cannot exerciſe Hoſpitality; they can do ſomething of it, tho not the whole. The pooreſt Man can have kind Thoughts, and a benign Diſpoſition toward a Stranger; he can look chearfully on him, he can ſpeak and carry civilly towards him: He can perhaps ſhew the way to a wandring Traveller. The things which he can do, every one ſhould do in this matter: and all will do it, that have any regard to the Law writ in our Hearts, or to the Holy Scripture, to what was commanded the Jews by *Moſes*, or injoyn'd all Men by Chriſt Jeſus: If they will follow the Examples of good and holy Men, or be Imitators of God himſelf; If they

they will not be worſe than Heathens: If they will receive good to themſelves, or be Benefactors to others, and good to the World: If they will eſcape the ſad Doom to everlaſting Miſery, and be admitted to endleſs Joys, let them *follow after Hoſpitality*, and be kind and good to *Strangers*.

I have hitherto diſcourſed of *Hoſpitality* in general, and the Obligation under which all Men are to uſe it. I now apply my ſelf to *you*, Gentlemen, who are of this (in my account) Honourable Company, which was not made a Corporation till the 6th of *Hen.* the 8th, as the Hiſtorian ſaith. It is to me a wonder, that it ſhould have no ancienter Date, unleſs it were becauſe the Neceſſities of Men of this Profeſſion were not ſo many, nor frequent, and ſo did not ſo much require a Proviſion againſt them, as in ſome others they did.

Or elſe it might be becauſe your own benign and friendly Diſpoſition did as cloſely and firmly unite you, as any Charter or Patent could do.

Be the cauſe what it will, it matters not. *To you* that either are of this Employment, or at leaſt think it honourable to bear the Name, and go under the Character of *Innholders*, I now addreſs my ſelf, and ſpeak to you all under that Notion.

I have exhorted all Men to be hoſpitable, I now call upon you more particularly, to uſe *Strangers* well. I do not, becauſe I hope I need not, beſpeak you to be juſt and honeſt. I hope there is not one amongſt you, that

that would injure, that would rob your Gueſts, that would not be true to the Truſts they repoſe in you, that would take from them more than by the Law of Nations and Nature, as well as the Cuſtom of this Land, you may challenge as your own.

But not doubting of your Juſtice and Honeſty, I beſpeak your Kindneſs and Friendſhip to your Gueſts. Do not only no ill Offices, but alſo do all good ones; be *kindly affectionated to them* that come into your Houſes; expreſs this good Affection in a benign pleaſing Aſpect, and courteous civil Language, and all manner of good Deeds you can do.

If you ſee your Gueſt ignorant of the Cuſtom of the Place, inform him. If you ſee him viciouſly inclined, tho it be in a Caſe where you might be inriched by his Folly, that is, by Intemperance or the like, yet reſtrain him, be ſo bold as to deny what he calls for, when you ſee him exceed the Bounds of ſober Chearfulneſs. Perhaps he may thank you for putting this Reſtraint on him another time; or if he do not, you act like a true Chriſtian *Gaius*, like an honeſt and vertuous Hoſt and Friend.

And as you will do well to reſtrain ſuch Exceſſes, and to withhold the Fuel of Intemperance; ſo you muſt take care that your Gueſts be ſupplied with all that Nature wants, and well regulated Deſires call for. See that your Proviſions be good, that your Meat and Drink be wholſom and well ordered, that your Lodgings be eaſy and accom-

accommodate for the Travellers Quiet and safe Repose; and that your House may be a Shelter, a Harbour, a Sanctuary, a Home to your Guest.

Let your Servants also be diligent and faithful in their Ministries. Let your Kindness also extend to the Servants of your Guests, if they be attended.

Nay, let it come out of the Chamber, and visit the Stable, that the poor weary Horse be not neglected. And when you are to receive the Recompence, which the Law allows for all this Care, do not take the Advantage you have of hoisting up the Prices of things to the utmost; but according to a moderate Estimate of matters deal with him; and give him occasion to say, that you have not only been just, but fair; that you have used him kindly as well as honestly; that you have not been an Host, but a Friend.

Use your Guest so, that he may not miss his other Acquaintance and Friends, nor have occasion to complain that he is from home.

If any one should demand of me for what reason he should do this? I think I might give him full Satisfaction. For,

1. I would tell him that this will be the best and surest way to bring Guests to his House, and thereby promote his Secular Interest. Men will themselves go and invite their Friends to the House where they have been well used. But this is a small matter; For,

2. This

2. This is a neceſſary Exerciſe of that univerſal Love and Benevolence, which is found in every good Man: Where-ever Love is, it will be working, as it has opportunity. And I am ſure thoſe of your Profeſſion have great and frequent Opportunities of expreſſing their Humanity and Goodneſs.

This then is my Plea; You have a fair Opportunity of doing much Good, neglect it not. Above all, I beſeech you take heed leſt you turn that into an occaſion of Evil and Miſchief, which was intended for Beneficence and good Offices.

3. Your very Calling, and the Nature of your Employment requires you to be good to Strangers, ſo that if you be not kind, you are not honeſt, you are not what you profeſs to be.

(1.) Out of an Inclination to this way of Life, 'tis to be ſuppoſed you have taken it up: or at leaſt you have been bred to it, and profeſs it; and will you not do what you ſeem and pretend, and bear the World in hand you do? this cannot conſiſt with Juſtice.

(2.) *You* are they who are truſted by the Government to entertain Strangers, and how can you break this Truſt? This is a Truſt publickly committed to you, which therefore you muſt by no means break.

The *Eſſenes*, as *Joſephus* tells us, who were ſo famous for Hoſpitality, choſe ſome excellent Perſons to take care of Strangers. You are thoſe choice Perſons, upon whom, by

by our Conſtitution this great Care is left. You are by Publick Authority ſet in this Station; ſee therefore that you maintain it, that you diſcharge ſo publick a Truſt.

(3.) Strangers themſelves put a Confidence in you, they expect you ſhould have a care of them, they look for not only juſt, but fair Dealing; they hope to be treated friendly and civilly, as well as honeſtly. And if you do not thus, you diſappoint and deceive them, and ſo cannot be honeſt.

(4.) You are publickly allowed ſome Recompence for this. And ſince the Law doth not forbid, and your Gueſts are content to make fair Allowance for what you do in this kind, it is great Injuſtice not to deſerve it of them.

4. Let me deſire you to conſider what place you fill up in the World. Now I look on your Employment thus to have begun.

In the firſt Ages of the World, when Men were fewer and better than now they are: I ſuppoſe the beſt and richeſt to have entertained Strangers freely, and that they received no Requital, but only ſome Expreſſions of Gratitude.

Afterward, when the World was more peopled, as in the days of *Abraham*, as I know not but this was become a Trade by that time; ſo I am ſure that thoſe that were both good and rich, would ſtill continue the ancient free Hoſpitality; they would not be deprived of the Pleaſure, and other Advantages they had by Converſe with Strangers.

In

In these latter days, when Men are more numerous, and travel more frequently, and do not carry their Houses with them, as they did at first: and when Money, that common Measure of the worth of all things, is so easily carried; and for these and some such Reasons, it is thought best by all, there should be such Houses as yours of publick Reception; So that now the Care of Strangers by the consent of Mankind, is even wholly devolv'd upon you; others, in a manner discharging themselves of it (tho' all ought not) for, some in these days are as Rich, as they were in old times, and if they were but as kind too, they would entertain strangers still: But however, they all casting this on you, this Consideration must carry great force in it to engage you to Hospitableness.

As the Hospitals are Places appointed for the Sick, and the Lame, and the Poor; so your Houses are Hospitals for the Stranger, the Traveller to come into; yours are ξενοδοχεῖα, as theirs are πτωχοδοχεῖα.

You seem to be risen up in the Room, and to fill the places of those antient Hosts, *Abraham* and *Lot*, and such other great and good Men, whose Houses were open to all Strangers: Be you therefore Imitators of them. I do not mean that you should entertain all on free-cost, as they did: that your Conditions will not suffer; nor would this (according to the best estimate of things I can make, be for the good of the World: that is, it would be no way to maintain

that *Equality*, by which *Societies* subsist.

But this is that I would perswade you to, to be as kind to Strangers as they were, to do them all the good and friendly Offices within your Power, that any of them did. Let your Hearts be as large, tho' your hands cannot be so open; and by this means you will be the *Children of Abraham*, if you thus *walk in the Steps of the Faith of Abraham*.

Now that the Love more than the Wealth of Men is decreased, and we are grown more selfish and contracted in our Spirits; now that there's less Generosity in the World than there was, let me call upon you to emulate the Goodness of old Times, and to retrieve that ancient Hospitality which is almost lost. Be so kind and good to your Guests, that they may have no occasion to complain of these Days, that they are ill for Strangers, nor wish they had lived in those former Times.

5. And let me also speak to you as *English-Men*, and desire you, that you would use your Guests well and kindly for the honour of your Nation, which by a French Libeller was censured for Incivility to Foreigners. But I think his Animadverter observ'd, that it was only a Remark upon Boys, who being surpriz'd with some odd uncouth Garb, or ridiculous Carriage, might laugh at it.

Or else perhaps there was not so much Talk and Noise, and Shew of Officiousness, as he had met with in his own Nation.

But to let him pass, I have had this Account from divers of the beyond-Sea Inns, espe-

especially *French*, that they exceed us in three things.

1. The Host receives his Guest with more Expressions of Respect, more Civility of Speech, and courteous Behavior.

2. The Servants and Attendants are more numerous, and more officious and diligent than ours.

3. That their Reckonings are more favourable in some Places.

Whether all this be true, I know not; but I desire you to consider, that none may on such accounts as these blame us, nor desire to travel beyond Sea, rather than in their own Country. Let Strangers have no just occasion to complain for such things as these.

6. I do the more earnestly press all this on You, because You have fair Opportunities, that invite and assist You in being hospitable. Some Men, who have mind enough to converse with, and be kind to Strangers, cannot, if they should go out to seek for them, find them. Besides, their Manner of Living, their House, their Estate, their Employment, will not comport with it. But it is quite contrary with You, they come home to You, and your Way of Life makes it necessary for You to see and be with them.

All that I call for more is, That You would be kind and friendly to them; that, as St. *John* saith to *Gaius*, whatsoever You do to *Brethren* or Strangers, You may do it faithfully and heartily; that You would comply with the fair Opportunities You have of practising an excellent Vertue.

OF DOING GOOD UNTO ALL MEN.

GAL. 6. 10.

As we have therefore Opportunity, let us do Good unto all Men.

IT is generally confeſſed that all Men in the World have ſomething to *do*, a Buſineſs wherein they are to be Employed; and that one ought to live Idlely. Whoſoever would do nothing, he affects the greateſt violence to Nature that can be.

It is alſo agreed that Men ought to *do good*, for it is more eligible to do nothing than to do Evil. But what that is, which in general we call *Good*, to whom and at what time we ought to do it, this is not ſo well underſtood ordinarily.

A great Part of every Man's Buſineſs in the World is with and about Men: And therefore moſt of the Duties, which God hath enjoyned him, relate to them: And his Happineſs no leſs depends on his Diſcharge of theſe Duties than any others. For, Juſtice and Charity, Faithfulneſs and Gratitude are as neceſſary Conditions of Eternal Life as the Worſhip of God.

In the Text we are inſtructed what our Carriage ſhould be to *all Men*, and exhorted to it. And our Inſtruction is delivered us ſo ſhort, and yet ſo full and plain; and the Exhortation is founded on ſo clear and ſtrong Reaſon, that if we will conſider, we cannot but underſtand our Duty, and if we do, we ſhall certainly reſolve, that it's good and neceſſary to practiſe it.

Therefore. This Particle ſhews the Text to be an Inference or Concluſion drawn from what was ſaid before. The Coherence of Scripture is very dark in the Epiſtles. It is uſual in the ſtile of this ſacred Book to fall from one thing to another immediately, and as it were accidentally, and without continuation of a long Diſcourſe: But the reference which this Concluſion has to the Context ſeems to be this; The Apoſtle in the beginning of the Chapter had perſwaded

ed

ed the *Galatians* to a gentle tender Carriage towards their faulty *Brethren*, and to *bear one anothers Burdens*: Alſo to a grateful and liberal Retribution to their Spiritual Inſtructors. To enforce theſe Particulars, he uſes an Argument, which perſwades to all ſorts of good Actions; *Whatſoever*, ſays he, a *Man ſoweth, that ſhall he alſo reap*; i. e. according as a Man acts, it ſhall be with him; as his carriage is now, his condition ſhall be hereafter. But that they might not loſe their reward, by giving over well-doing, he exhorts them to Conſtancy. And that they might not think it long before it come, He tells them, they ſhall *receive* what they expect (ἰδίῳ καιρῷ) in *Gods time*, that which Divine Wiſdom has ſet, and is therefore certain and the beſt time.

After theſe Arguments he concludes with the Text. *As we have therefore Opportunity, let us do good unto all Men, eſpecially unto them who are of the Houſhold of Faith*; i. e. Since Men ſhall be rewarded according to their Works, and they that continue to *do well* (καλὸν) that which is Honourable and Worthy, Handſome and Becoming, ſhall not fail of a great Recompence from God; let us *do* that which is *good* and beneficial to Men, *to all Men*, and eſpecially to *Chriſtians* as *Opportunity* ſerves. I will briefly gloſs on the Words.

Therefore; That which follows is by its own Light known to be good, it's a Principle; which evinces it's own truth and goodneſs. However, the Apoſtle takes in

Arguments from without to enforce it. It's good to take all ways to perſwade and engage Men to Vertue, to uſe all Arguments to convince and move them.

Exhortations to Vertue are as rational and accountable as any other thing. They are Concluſions drawn from as clear and evident Principles as any. For, let it be laid down, as it cannot be denied or doubted, that Man is of ſuch a Nature, and ſet in ſuch Circumſtances to God, and to other Men; And all the Vertues that were ever commended by the Heathens, and commanded in the Religion of Chriſt, will neceſſarily reſult.

Man never acts with ſo much Reaſon, can never give ſo good an account of himſelf, as when he is in the practice of Vertue in general, particularly *Doing good*, &c.

Let us. Theſe words ever imply that ſomething may and ought to be done, no Exhortation, but ſuppoſes that: Wiſdom never requires what is in it ſelf Impoſſible, nor exhorts them who are utterly Impotent and can do nothing.

Again, *Let us.* The Apoſtle is not of their Number, *who bind heavy Burdens to lay on other Mens Shoulders, but themſelves will not touch them with one of their Fingers.* He requires nothing of others which he does not himſelf. He does that which he enjoyns them, and ſo engages them by his Example as well as his Counſel.

As we have opportunity. Time and Seaſon are carefully to be obſerved. Time is abſolutely

ſolutely neceſſary to every Action, and Seaſon is neceſſary to the well doing of it. It is as the Wind and Tide, that makes the Work eaſier and quicker when it is with us: We can do more and with leſs Pains, when we ſtrike in with *Opportunity*.

We may be ſaid to have an *Opportunity* in general, whenever we can do any thing; more particularly and properly, when we are aſſiſted by ſuch an happy concurrence of all other External Cauſes and Circumſtances, on which our Action depends, as we can do it *beſt*; i. e. 1*ſt*, When that Action is moſt convenient and ſuitable to us in that Condition. 2*dly*, When it will be done with leaſt pains and difficulty. And, 3*dly*, with moſt certainty, when our Endeavours will be moſt effectual.

A Time, when any Action is the beſt, or as good as any that can be done, is the ſeaſon of that Action; that is καιρὸς, an Opportunity ſimply ſo called. And when that action is not only the beſt that can be done, but can alſo be *beſt* done at that time, this is not only καιρὸς but εὐκαιρία, a good Opportunity. The former we find, *Heb.* 11. 15. the latter, in St. *Mat.* 26. 16.

All our Actions depend, 1*ſt*, on our own Power, the inward Principle from whence they proceed; 2*dly*, on the Concurrence of Divers External Cauſes, which make us act with more eaſe, and in leſs time, and more ſurely to effect what we endeavour. According to this, we may be ſaid to have an *Opportunity* of doing good to Men, whenever

ever we can do it, and when we have so much assistance from External Causes, as that we can *best*, i. e. with most ease, and quickness and certainly do what we intend.

As, *i. e.* When and whilst, as soon and as oft as *we have Opportunity*. Do not overrun, do not stay behind, but accompany the Season, take the Tide, set up your Sails when the Wind is with you, lose no time, slip no opportunity; and whilst that lasts let us continue, up and be doing with the first Light, and hold on till the *Night come when no Man can Work*.

Let us do. Let us not only think of doing good, and talk, but do: (ἐργαζώμεθα) Let it be our Work, our Business, our Trade, that in which we employ our selves; the word implies Care and Diligence, and perhaps Pains in acting: The thing to be done (*Good*) requires more Power to effect it than Evil does: Very impotent things can do great Mischiefs, but they must be Powerful that do any great Good.

Besides; We had need thus to work in this Business of doing Good, because we shall find Difficulty, and meet with Opposition in it. Our corrupted Natures are very backward to it, it is contrary to the Practice of this degenerate World. Let us use our Endeavour to do what we can. And let none reflect on the Wisdom of that Divine Spirit, by which St. *Paul* writ; nor so deny their own Sense, as to say they can do nothing; this is but a Plea for Idleness and Unwillingness to *do good*; by the same

ſame reaſon they may alſo ſay, they cannot walk, nor ſpeak: For, all our Power, both for the one and the other, is from God originally. But what is that which we are to do?

Let us do Good, (τὸ ἀγαθὸν) *i. e.* that which is profitable, behooveful, beneficial, and advantagious: By this Word we are here and every where (when it is uſed of Creatures) to underſtand that which conduces to the Preſervation and Perfection of their Beings and Powers.

When we call any thing *good*, we refer it always to ſomething or other. Here it is applied to *Men*, and we underſtand by it particularly Wiſdom and Vertue, inward Quiet and Pleaſure, Life and Health, and all thoſe Circumſtances, which contribute towards the getting and ſecuring of theſe Perfections. Briefly, that which has a tendency to Man's attaining his End, his Perfection and Happineſs, that we call *Good*. To *do Good* to Men, is to do thoſe Actions, which tend to make them as perfect as is poſſible for them, and to bring them into the happieſt Circumſtances they can be in.

Unto all Men, i. e. not to our ſelves only, but to them that partake of our Nature, (πρὸς πάντας) to All. This doubtleſs means Men. But yet our Kindneſs to them is not excluſive of other inferior Animals: *The good Man is merciful to his Beaſt.* And as the *Ointment poured on* Aaron's *Head, ran down to the loweſt Hem of his Garment*; ſo the Beneficence of a good Man is ſo diffuſive,

fuſive, that it reaches the loweſt parts of the Creation of God, of which (according to *Philo*) the High-Prieſt's Veſtment was an Emblem.

Indeed *our Goodneſs* (as the Pſalmiſt ſpeaks) extends not unto God, and very little to Angels, farther than it excites and occaſions their greater Joy: But it may to the Saints that are on Earth, and to all our Brethren, the Sons of *Adam*, and to the Creatures of a lower kind, which God has made to ſerve us.

But our Apoſtle here means *Men*, all that have rational Souls, and Bodies of the ſame Make with our ſelves, and capable of as great Happineſs or Miſery. He requires us to do Good to all theſe, to exclude none, whether they be Acquaintance or Strangers, our Countrey-men or Foreigners, Friends or Enemies; all, tho of contrary Perſuaſions, or of bad Practices; all and every one. We are to aim at the Happineſs of every Man, to endeavour the Perfection and good State of *All*.

An unlimited Love, an unconfined Charity is here required; and a ſelfiſh, or a contracted Affection are here excluded; wherever Man is, Love is to be. But is there no difference to be made? Yes, in caſe of a Competition of oppoſite Intereſts, ſome are to be preferred above and before others: So the Apoſtle directs in the following Words;

Eſpecially to them who are of the Houſhold of Faith, i. e. who are of the Houſhold or Family

mily of God by Faith, (as *Grotius* expounds it) *i. e.* the Children and Servants of God, which they are in an especial manner, who believe and obey the Gospel, the Disciples and Followers of Christ Jesus, whose Life was in nothing more remarkable, in nothing so imitable by us, as in Benignity, and Kindness, and universal Charity. They who by Faith obey him, are of the Family of God, God takes especial care and provides for them; he takes them, as it were, under his Roof and Harbour: They profess and practise the best Religion in the World: And altho they may be ignorant of, or mistaken in some Matters; yet they believe and understand so much as makes them *deny Ungodliness, and worldly Lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present World*; to love other Men so, as they *do to them, as themselves would be done to by them*; and to love and trust in their God, who made, and redeem'd, and sanctifies, and will eternally save them.

Let them be of the Eastern or Western Church, let them dwell in the North or South, let their Differences be what they will, if they be as I have described, they are the chief Objects of our Care and Benevolence. We are to do good to them chiefly, tho not only.

Having thus briefly glos's'd on all the Words, I shall treat chiefly of that Clause, *Let us do Good unto All*, i. e. to the Community of Mankind, and to all Particulars.

A Man may be deceived whilſt he is contemplating Generals only, unleſs he deſcend to Particulars. An *Idea* of Human Nature is a lovely thing; no Man thinks of it, but is pleaſed with it in general, he hath no malice againſt it: But we muſt alſo conſider it particularly, as it is ſubjected in this or that Man. A Man may be *Aliquis in omnibus, & nullus in ſingulis*, in reſpect of his Love, as well as his Knowledg. We muſt do good to the Generality of Mankind, but we muſt alſo do good to Particulars.

Again; We muſt be beneficent to this, and that, and the other Man, but yet always with reſpect to the reſt of Mankind. Our particular Affection muſt not exclude our Regard to the Community. On the other ſide, our loving and doing good to this, or that, or the other Perſon, muſt conſiſt with, and be determin'd and bounded by our doing good unto all Men. This is founded on that received Principle, The greateſt Good is to be preferred; and it is a greater Good which reaches more, than that which belongs to fewer: And *cæteris paribus*, that is better which is good to all, than that which is only good to ſome.

In treating of this Argument, I ſhall enquire:

1. What that is which is Good to Man.
2. By what means we can contribute to it.

3. Free

3. Free the Apoſtle's ſenſe from ſome Difficulties.
4. Offer ſome Conſiderations that may engage us all to the Practice of this great and good Duty.

I. In anſwer to our firſt Enquiry. That in general is *Good to Man*, which is either his Perfection, or which has a Tendency to it; that has the Goodneſs of the End, this of the Means.

Here we are to conſider, that Man is made up of two Natures, of various Powers and Faculties; that one of theſe Natures is ſuperiour to the other, and ſome of theſe Faculties are ſubſervient to the other: that when we ſpeak of Perfection, we intend the Perfection of the whole, and have ſpecial regard to that which is principal and ſupream, the Soul of Man. For, tho the Body has its Perfections and Goods, yet if theſe be not conſiſtent with, and ſubſervient to the Soul, they are of no account.

We are not therefore ſo much to conſider our lower Appetites, and the State of the Body in this Diſcourſe, but as it is ſerviceable to Kowledg and Wiſdom, to a Determination of our ſelves according to Reaſon, to the good Government of our Wills and Affections, and contributes to that Joy and Peace, which is conſequent on Vertue and Goodneſs. Nor is any State of our Body, or any outward Condition to be accounted good but evil, which does diſſerve and hinder us either in the uſe of our Underſtandings, or

in

in the Government of our Wills and Appetites. If it do not further and promote these things, it is not good to us, as Men.

I will more particularly speak my meaning in these few Propositions.

1. Man's Perfection consists in a good, *i. e.* a clear, distinct, full and quick understanding of all those things that are within his Compass: particularly in the Knowledg of God, and of himself, and of the Rules and Reasons of his own Actions.

2. In a Will constantly following what is Good. In the Guidance and Government of his Affections, his Appetite and Inclinations, his Intentions and Resolutions, and all Principles of Action, according to his best and cleerest Knowledg. Particularly, in the exercise of a natural, rational, hearty Religion, in a constant and even Fervency of Devotion toward God; also in the Inclinations, Habits and Practices of Vertue: which refers to Men, all which is summ'd up in *Love* and *Goodwill*.

3. In that Joy and Peace, that Tranquillity and Satisfaction which is the Companion of an Understanding so enlightened, and a Will so directed.

4. That is a good State and Temper of Body, which will not obstruct and hinder, but assist and be instrumental and serviceable to the Soul in all these things. Natural Life, and Health and Strength, and such like are the Bodies Goods; which are then good to Man, when they serve the Ends aforesaid, when they minister to Religion

gion and Vertue, to Knowledg and Goodneſs.

5. Thoſe outward Circumſtances, an Eſtate and Reputation, and ſuch like, are the beſt, which moſt help us to obtain, to ſecure and uſe the Perfections before named; when they tend to increaſe our Religion toward God, or our Charity to Men, and miniſter to our Devotions and Vertue, as a competent Eſtate, and a clear Reputation have an Aptitude to do.

All that's good to Man in any reſpect, muſt be either ſubſervient, or at leaſt conſiſtent with this; therefore a Gratification of the ſenſitive Appetite, if it prove prejudicial to Vertue and the Soul, is not good, but evil to the Man: And an Eſtate may be for *hurt to the Owner thereof*, as *Solomon* ſpeaks.

God many times doth good to us, when he withholds Eſtates, or Health, or Reputation from us. For, thereby he cures us of many Maladies, rids us of many Vices. And ſo amongſt Men, they that have Power over others, and underſtand which are the beſt Methods to promote their Happineſs, do it very often by inflicting ſome Penalty, and by debarring them of ſome Gratification of one or more of their Appetites.

But we muſt ſee that this be not a *Cloak for Maliciouſneſs*: we muſt not pretend that to be a Kindneſs, which is not; nor ſay we act from Charity, and with Intention to make others happy, when we act from Revenge; when Peeviſhneſs, or Malice, are

the true Principles of what we do.

We conſider Man all this while in his preſent State, but we are alſo to conſider him in reference to the future: And in that reſpect we attribute as great Perfection to him, as we can ſuppoſe him capable of; that he is there freed from all the Imperfection, under which the beſt Men labour here, and delivered from thoſe bad Circumſtances, from which the moſt fortunate Men are not exempted in this Life.

Thus I have given a ſhort Summary of what's good to Man; and you will ſee the Reaſon in the following Diſcourſe, why I have made ſuch particular and diſtinct mention of that which is a ſubordinate, and that which is a principal and final Good, of that which is good to a part, and to the whole.

II. I now proceed to ſhew what are thoſe ways in which one Man may do good to another. They are of two ſorts; either ſuch as are mediate, and which by means of others; or immediate, and by himſelf are done.

Of the firſt ſort are our hearty Deſires and Prayers to God, that he would do them good; and alſo when we live ſo good Lives, as God is pleaſed to teſtify his Acceptance of them, by ſhewing Mercy to our Family, Kindred, or Country. Thus the Poſterity of *Abraham* obtained great Mercies for his ſake. Of this kind alſo are our Perſuaſions and Intreaties with Men on the behalf

behalf of others, when we prevail with others to do them that Good, which our selves could not. To this also appertains the making of good and true Reports, and giving just, but fair Characters of Men. When we give any Character of another Man, it must be a good one, so far as is consistent with Truth and Justice: we must always speak true, and never ill of any Man, unless it be the best Method to make him wise and good, or it may be necessary for the publick Good, or the Information of that Man, to whom we are most obliged. This is a way to increase a Man's Power, and enlarge his Opportunity of doing Good; which I wish that all, who falsly, or but groundlesly calumniate others, would consider. Let all that needlesly carry about little Stories of the Miscarriages and Imperfections of their Brethren, and *uncover* their *Nakedness*, only to gratify their own, or their Companions ill Nature, remember they do a great Mischief.

These are the ways we take to do Men good in, by the Mediation of others. The other by our selves are these three.

1. Discourse: By this we inform the ignorant, rectify the mistaken, satisfy the doubtful, compose the unquiet, moderate the vehement, excite the dull, revive the languishing. In short, by Discourse, we may direct and persuade Men to be wise and good, we may minister to their Peace and Joy, we may end Quarrels. I need add no more, because we are all as sensible of the

Beneficialneſs of a good Tongue, as we are of the Miſchievouſneſs of a bad one.

2. The Communication of our Eſtates, or the uſe of our Power, or Intereſt, or Skill for the Relief of others. By this means, how does the Oppreſſed rejoice, and the heart of the Poor ſing? The Priſoner triumphs in his Liberty, and the Poor that he has got an Alms, *&c.* The

3. is Example; which has a powerful, and a large and laſting Influence. For Examples do more particularly, and ſenſibly inſtruct, more powerfully convince and perſwade, more ſtrongly incline, and ſurely ingage and determine us to wiſe and good Practices than Diſcourſes themſelves.

Man doth ſo naturally imitate, that he is very prone to do whatſoever he ſees done; and thus Religion and Vertue may be propagated from one to another, till it hath ſpread over a Kingdom, nay over the whole World, and may be derived from one Age and Generation to another.

We and all the World are ſenſible of excellent Advantages we have received from the holy and vertuous Examples of thoſe that have liv'd hundreds, thouſands of Years ſince.

Thus I have briefly enumerated the general ways, wherein one Man may do good to another; which I have ſo particularly done for theſe Reaſons.

1. That we having a true, large and comprehenſive Notion of all that's good to Man, and what we can do to attain it, might not confine

confine our ſelves to endeavour after ſome one particular Good, but might ſeek the Good of Man in it's greateſt Extent and Latitude; which will give us this Advantage, that we ſhall never be unimployed in this good Work, but when we cannot be good to Men in one kind, we may in another.

Sometimes, when we cannot inſtruct Men, and rectify their Miſtakes immediately; yet we may innocently divert and pleaſe them at preſent, and make way for their conſidering what we ſhall ſay another time. By this alſo we ſhall be ſatisfied, tho we be not doing them that Good we moſt deſire to do; yet if we deſire to do them that which we can do, tho we cannot make them richer, if we can help to make them contented (which by our Diſcourſe and Example we may) it may ſatisfy us. We ſhall in this caſe do to them, as *Peter* and *John* to the lame Man that asked Money; they had no *Silver* nor *Gold*, but they cured him of his Lameneſs: Or tho we cannot make Men wiſe at preſent, yet if we can make them innocently merry, we do them good. That's the firſt.

2. That by our diſtinct Conceptions of the ſeveral Orders and Degrees of Good, we might be kept from turning Good into Evil. How many are there that by their Ignorance of this intend well, but do ill to Men? And he that is ignorant, that conſiders not which are the Goods that are final, and which ſubordinate; which are for the

whole, and which for the part; which are for the present, and of short continuance, and which for the future, and for ever, is very prone to slide into this Miscarriage. Such a Man will please his Child, or Servant, or Friend, by a fond, and easy, and importune Compliance with his Humor, which is to gratify him at present, but by this deprives him of those lasting Advantages, which a Father's Correction, or a Master's Rebuke, or a Friend's Admonition might have brought. He pleases his Humor, but perhaps ruins both Soul and Body, and had been much more kind, if he had given wholesom, tho unpleasing Counsel. That's the second.

3. I have therefore mentioned these things so particularly, that we might be instructed to lay out our greatest Care and Pains, and use our utmost Diligence about that Good which is greatest and best, that we may not spend our selves, and our Time upon Trifles and lesser Matters, whilst we neglect those that are of far greater concernment to them: For, by understanding that Religion and Vertue, that Knowledg and Goodness are most essential and intrinsecal to the greatest Happiness of Man, we shall not so much instruct him how to grow rich, as how to be wise and good; nor shall we be so diligent to cure a bodily Disease, whilst we neglect his Vices, those Distempers of Mind.

4. And I have therefore considered all the several Ways wherein we can do Good, that

that ſo we might not fail to do all that we can, nor be vainly troubled that we do no more. It's but little Good that any Man can do, it's highly reaſonable he ſhould not fail in any of that; and it would be fooliſh to grieve he doth no more than he is capable of doing, tho this is the Caſe of ſome melancholy and ſcrupulous Perſons.

Thus we ſee what uſe to make of what has been already diſcourſed. But before I leave this Particular, let me add this, That in all we do for the Advantage of others, we are to obſerve three things:

1. Our own Ability, and the Opportunity we ſhall (probably) have to effect what we intend: for if our Undertakings be not proportion'd to our Power, or the Aſſiſtance of concurrent Cauſes, we ſhall not accompliſh what we intend, we ſhall be defeated of our Purpoſe, and labour in vain, which we ought to prevent by all Means.

2. We ought to conſider in what degree and order that which we aim at is good, for the Reaſons already mention'd, that if there be a Competition, we may always (*cæteris paribus*) prefer that which is beſt, and may ſubordinate the other to that.

3. We muſt alſo have a regard to the Neceſſity, the Number, and the Valuableneſs of the Perſons to whom we intend well; every Man's Prudence will ſerve to direct him by theſe Intimations, and keep him within the Bounds of Juſtice.

All that I will add under this Consideration is, the Rule our Saviour has given, That we should make every Man's Case our own; for naturally Man is not so apt to consider another as himself. This will both excite us to Diligence, and make us charitable. —

But to conclude this Particular: If any Man ask me, What that is, that every one can and must do for all and every Man in the World, without exception?

I answer; He may and must pray to God, that they may be good Christians in this Life, and blessed and happy in the future. We must pray, that (which God hath declared to be his Will) *All Men may be saved, and come to the knowledg of the Truth*; i. e. that they may be brought to believe and obey the Gospel, and so may be made Partakers of everlasting Life and Glory. Our Liturgy also teaches us to pray, that God would *have Mercy upon all Men.*

But I need not prove that this is our Duty; surely there's none that owns himself a Christian, or but a Man, that doubts of this: I therefore take it for granted, and will infer from this Concession,

1. That every Man in the World ought to desire, that every other Man may be good and vertuous on Earth, and everlastingly happy in Heaven. If he must pray for this, that implies he must desire it; and if he do pray to God for it, if he be hearty and sincere, he does desire it.

2. That every Man ought also to do what he can, to further every other Man's present

preſent Goodneſs, and thereby his future Happineſs. If he be a Man that can diſcourſe rationally and movingly, he ſhould plainly deſcribe their Duties to the Ignorant, and paſſionately exhort the Lazy and Careleſs to the performance of them. Or if he has a good Pen, let him deliver theſe things to Poſterity, which are uſeful for them to know.

But that which the Unlearned may reach, is to live a religious and an honeſt Life, and by this commend the Practice of Holineſs to others. And who knows how far the Influence of one poor Man's Goodneſs may reach? Perhaps to both the *Indies*, and the furtheſt parts of the World. This is the ſecond thing I infer, our Endeavour.

From which follows by way of Corollary, that we muſt take care never to do any thing that interferes with our Endeavour after every other Man's Happineſs hereafter, and his Goodneſs here. We muſt never do any thing that's inconſiſtent with Mens being good Men in this World, and their Happineſs in that to come.

But that's not all that is implied in our Endeavour, that we do nothing to oppoſe and hinder Men from being good and happy: It implies alſo, that we do that which is ſerviceable to the attaining theſe Ends; and in all dealings with them, in all we do to and about them, that we help forward their Vertue and Happineſs; that either by more remote or nearer Methods, either by our ſelves or others, we contribute to their

preſent

preſent Holineſs, and their Glory in the Life to come.

If we do not thus, we are inconſiſtent with our ſelves, and our Actions contradict each other; we are acted by contrary Paſſions, and the Principles of our Actions oppoſe and thwart each other: For, when we deſire Men may be good, and vertuous, and everlaſtingly happy, this proceeds from Love and Good-will; but when we deſign to puniſh them in their Bodies, or to diminiſh their Reputations, or leſſen their Eſtates; unleſs this be in order to their great Happineſs, and unleſs we intend to further that in ſuch ways, we do not act from Charity but Hatred; except ſuch particular Evils be inflicted on them by us for their Amendment, and with eſpecial regard to their everlaſting Salvation, we are not charitable, but malicious: And if it be ſo, we are at variance with our ſelves; we deſire Men may be miſerable here, and happy hereafter, not that thereby they may be ſo.

I wiſh that which I have here ſaid, may not be a Sanctuary to Uncharitableneſs; and that Men will ſay, they intend to do Men ſome greater Good by the Evils they lay on them. Landlords oppreſs their Tenants, to make them more diligent; Maſters will be hard, ſevere, and high to their Servants, to keep them in their due Obſervance; Fathers auſtere to their Children, to teach them Obedience: One Man will eclipſe another Man's Reputation, that he may not have an opportunity to do ſo much Miſchief as he might,

might, if he was unſuſpected. It's well if theſe be not meer Excuſes of Paſſion and ill Nature; 'tis well if they think as they ſay, and if it be as they think, that theſe be the beſt ways to ſecure Men from thoſe Evils. But I fear, it's too often Peeviſhneſs, and a waſpiſh angry Spirit that evaporates, and is not employ'd by Religion, and under the Conduct of Charity, nor deſigns any Good; or if Good be intended, I doubt, very often ſome wiſer and better Method might be taken for the effecting it.

The Apoſtle tells us of overcoming *Evil with Good*. I know, the hypocritical proud Phariſees, thoſe falſe-hearted Pretenders, were ſharply rebuked by our Saviour; and I doubt not but there are ſuch in our Days. Only let's be cautious we do not over-haſtily condemn Men, nor inconſiderately reſolve upon the Uſe of extreme Remedies, till the Diſeaſe ſeem incurable by any other.

When in ſome of theſe Ways we do that which tends to bring Men nearer Perfection and Happineſs, we do them Good.

But I need not be very particular in this, becauſe every Man's Mind will faithfully ſuggeſt to him what's good to and for other Men. No Man that is inclined to do Good to others, can eaſily be ignorant or miſtaken.

All the Danger is in theſe two Particulars:

1. That he ſhould only conſider a part, and not the whole, or the preſent only, without reference to what's future; and ſo many

many times may do them Hurt instead of Good. I have endeavoured to prevent this Mistake in my Explication, where I have determin'd those Actions to be good to others, which conduce to the obtaining of their last End, which tend to make them perfect and happy.

2dly; The other is, That he only hath regard to one or a few, and neglects others and more. Now the Text directs us here also, and teaches us to *do Good to all Men*, which is a Principle of great Wisdom and Justice; and that Man who observes it, and hath attain'd to this Disposition, to regard Universality, to take unto his Thoughts the Concerns of all Men, he will govern himself in his Carriage to them discreetly. He will be just and impartial in his Dealing; he will not, out of a too particular respect, neglect a more common publick Good; will not, to serve one or a few, disserve and prejudice, nay, or be mindless of the Concerns of the Community, of many. He that lives by this Rule, so to do Good to one Man, as remembring he must do so to all, he will neither be guilty of Littleness and Contractedness of Mind, nor of Partiality; and he that escapes these Rocks, he steers his Course well and wisely. And not only so, but he acts generously and bravely, and so as to deserve Praise. He that designs the Good of the World, and intends the Welfare of Mankind, and considers himself as one little part of the great *Compages*, (as indeed he is)

and

and never ſeparates his own particular Intereſts from the Order they have to the reſt of the Univerſe; this Man, as he apprehends truly, and judges right, and as he acts both wiſely and juſtly, ſo he alſo acts nobly and generouſly.

Every Man may be uſeful to another in all theſe reſpects, and for all the purpoſes I mention'd, and may contribute very much to his Happineſs.

He may alſo in all theſe ways retard and obſtruct the Happineſs of others, and promote their preſent and future Miſery.

We all have experienced the Advantages of Diſcourſe, which (as I have ſhewed) inſtructs Ignorance, convinces Miſtake, ſatisfies Doubts, compoſes Unquietneſs, moderates Vehemence, excites Dulneſs, refreſhes Memory; it both directs and perſuades us to Vertue, inclines to Benevolence, aſſiſts our Joy, and increaſes Pleaſure.

And there is none but is ſenſible what a good Name is, and hath been not only pleaſed, but alſo greatly aſſiſted in doing good Offices, by a good Report. I need not mind any that has liv'd in the World any time, how inſtrumental an evil Tongue may be to the Ruine of others; how by blaſting their Reputation, it obſtructs their doing Good; how it may ſeduce Men into Miſtakes and Lies, and rob them of common Senſe; how it may diſturb their Peace, and fire Mens Minds with turbulent and helliſh Paſſions.

Again;

Again; Good Examples do more effectually, *i. e.* more ſenſibly and particularly teach and inſtruct, more powerfully convince and perſuade, more ſurely incline, and engage, and determine us to good Practices, than Diſcourſes themſelves.

And nothing hath more Influence on us to make us wicked, and to lead us into Ways of Evil and Miſchief, than an ill Example: Nothing doth more inſinuate into our Thoughts, and inſenſibly, but forcibly draw us to wicked Practices, Nothing more encourages and emboldens Men to Sin, than to ſee others committing it. I do not ſay all, but I am ſure much of the Wickedneſs of the World comes by Imitation and Example.

And laſtly; When a Man doth, as *Job* ſaid he did, *deliver the Poor that cries, the Fatherleſs, and him that hath none to help him; is Eyes to the Blind, and Feet to the Lame; breaks the Jaws of the Oppreſſor, and plucks the Spoil out of his Teeth*, &c. Now that they are delivered from their Bondage, or drudging for neceſſary Supports of Life, they are vacant for the Employments of their Mind, and can have time to purſue after greater Goods, and better Enjoyments, and thoſe which contain more of Happineſs.

On the contrary; he that hurts the Body, or ſpoils the Eſtate, or abridges the Liberties of others, how doth he hinder and obſtruct Mens Happineſs, by diverting them from Attendance on their higheſt and principal

cipal Concerns, to low Services, and miniſtring to the Body?

And there is no Conſidering-Man will doubt, but that a good Man by his holy and vertuous Life, by his powerful Interceſſions with God, doth Good not only to himſelf, but others; nor to a few, but many; not to the preſent Age alone, but Poſterity ſhall *call him Bleſſed.*

Thus *Noah*, and *Abraham*, and *Moſes*, and *David*, were Bleſſings to the whole Nation of the Jews; and not to them only, but the *Gentiles* alſo have fared the better for theſe Mens Goodneſs.

This is a ſhort Delineation of the ſeveral Particulars, wherein one Man may be advantaged by another, and of the Ways wherein that can be done.

To conclude this; We muſt contribute what we can to the greateſt Happineſs and Perfection of Man, and do the greateſt Good we can; and all other leſſer and inferior Goods muſt be diſpens'd and imparted, or with-held by us, according as either of theſe will moſt contribute to his Perfection, to his being wiſe and holy, religious and vertuous here, and everlaſtingly bleſſed and glorious hereafter in the future State.

The greater Good is then in this Caſe to regulate our Actions. Let us ſo diſtribute our Alms, or give our Counſel, or lend our Help to any, as moſt to further their Vertue and Happineſs. Let us take care, that by ſuch things we do not ſet Men at further diſtance from Heaven; as we do, when we inſtruct

inſtruct a wicked Man ſo as by our Advice he accompliſhes his ill Deſigns; or if we beſtow our Alms on an idle Perſon, and thereby maintain him in his Sloth.

I add; Let us look that in all we do to others, we ſtill have an eye to their great Happineſs, and intend ſomewhat more in every Act of ours, than to beſtow on them ſome preſent and particular Advantage. Let us aim not only at the Gratification of an inferior and bodily Appetite, but at the Advantages of the Soul, of Vertue and Goodneſs, of preſent, and of future and everlaſting Happineſs. If we keep this ſtill in our Eye, we ſhall both do more Good, and more certainly do Good, than otherwiſe we ſhould.

This then is the Sum; Let us do any Good, every Good, all the Good we can, to All; ſtill preferring the greater in caſe of Competition, and ſubordinating all the leſſer to that which is principal, at leaſt, taking care that they be conſiſtent with, and never oppoſite to it.

III. I propounded to remove ſome Difficulties which lie againſt our doing Good to all Men: Two of the greateſt I think of, are theſe:

1. Then we muſt inflict Evil on none: We muſt not oppoſe an Enemy, nor proſecute an Offender, nor puniſh a Malefactor, which is altogether unuſual, and indeed impracticable; for there is no living on Earth, if this may not be.

2. If

2. If it must be our Business to do Good to all Men, this will take us off from that Regard to our selves, and our own particular Interests, which it's both natural and allowable for us to mind; we should rather, as we are exhorted, *study to be quiet, and to mind our own Business.*

First; I have already in my Explication very much prevented the former of these Objections: All that I need to say further is, That tho we are enjoined *to do Good to All*, yet this does not require we should do no Hurt to some, but rather enforce that on us, where it is the necessary or best Method to further their Happiness, to make them vertuous and wise, and qualify them for Heaven; or where it's necessary for procuring the Good of the Community, by securing the Interests of many or more valuable Persons, for those to whom we are more obliged upon other accounts, or of any injured Man.

We are not therefore by this Doctrine restrain'd from prosecuting and punishing Offenders: only it keeps our Anger and Hatred within their due Bounds, and requires them not to transgress the Limits which Charity hath set; that is, to do nothing inconsistent with the Goodness of any Man at present, or consequently with his everlasting Happiness. We must not punish Body and Soul too, that belongs only to him that is the Judge of Souls.

We must not do any thing, but what may be, and what we intend to be serviceable to their Happiness. And not to mention lower and lesser Penalties, even the Punishment of Death it self, has many times had this good Effect on them who have suffered it. Many Criminals by being sentenc'd to Death, have been brought to a true Remorse for their Sins, who probably had they escaped the Condemnation of the Judg, had fallen under the Condemnation of God.

So that this Doctrine only tends to moderate our Anger, to direct and restrain our Hatred, and to set Bounds to our worser Passions; not to extirpate, but to prune and rectify them, to bring them under the Government of Charity.

Secondly; The other Objection proceeds on a great Mistake, that he that doth *Good to All*, whose Temper and Principles engage him to such a large Beneficence, will neglect himself. Whereas,

1. It no way interferes with that natural Principle, but on the contrary, strengthens it: as will appear, if we consider,

(1.) That he that doth Good to all, doth Good to himself, for he is one of that Number; and he has a greater Opportunity of doing Good to himself, than any other, because he is alway with himself, so that a Man's self is not excluded from his Care.

If it be objected, That himself is but the only Object of his Care and Kindness: I answer; Nor is this either fit, or just, or rea-

reasonable, or natural. No Man can be the sole and adequate Object of his own Love; he cannot circle in himself, be his own both Center and Circumference. If he should force himself to such an unnatural life of himself, he would be very unhappy; if he take himself off from his Relations to others, he must be miserable.

(2.) Every Man must be first good to himself, that he may be more good to others. He that would be a Benefactor to other Men, must first be kind to himself.

(3.) He that is good to others, is best to himself: For,

First; He engages them to make him Returns of Kindness; and these Vicissitudes of Benefits preserve the Societies of Men, as the natural Life of Man is preserved by the Circulation of the Blood to and from the Heart. And,

2dly; If they fail to recompence, yet the great God will not; but whatsoever Good any Man doth, *he shall receive of the Lord*; his Prayers, and all his *Labour of Love* shall return into his own Bosom. And besides all this,

3dly; The very doing Good it self, is a Work that is an abundant Recompence to it self. To do Good, is certainly the highest Pleasure of which the Soul of Man is capable, as will appear further, when I shew the Advantages which will accrue to us by such an universal Goodness.

So then notwithstanding this Exception from Self-love, we may love universally,

and do Good to all: for, these are two natural Principles, that agree well together; which seems to be well represented in the natural World. For (as the Astronomers tell us) the Earth at the same time moves round its own Axis, and yet makes a Progression in the Ecliptick Circle, in which it always keeps the same steady Position, in reference to all the circumambient Bodies. This doth represent the Man of a regular Self-love, and an universal Charity: He moves about his own Center, but yet retains his Relation to the rest of Mankind, and keeps his Paralleliſm to the Axe of the Universe, as I may say. Or, to use a more familiar instance; The Systole and Diastole of the Heart, are very fit resemblances of a Man's doing good to himself and to others. The Blood's coming into the Heart, is the motion of Self-love; the flowing of it out from thence into all the extream parts of the Body, is his Love and Beneficence to others, to all Men. This is the motion that keeps Life in the Body; and the doing Good to a Man's self, and to the rest of the World, preserves Society, and tends to the Perfection of the Souls of Men.

I have said enough to clear this difficulty, and shewn that *to do good to all*, is no prejudice to any Man's particular Interests.

To sum up then what has been said by way of Explication. Because of the great advantages that will certainly accrue to us by such a practice, let us lay out our selves to procure the greatest good and happi-

ness

ness of every Man in the World: Not of our selves only, or our Kindred, our particular Acquaintance and Friends, or of good Men; but of all and every one, of those that are, and those that are not of our Blood, of Country-men and Foreigners, of such as think as we do, and of those that differ from us, of Friends and Enemies, of good Men and bad.

I intend the Perfection and Happiness, and in order to that, the Vertue and Goodness of all Men: Do this absolutely, (this is to be universally, indispensibly observed) and do them all other Good with reference and in order to this. Inform, Advise, Exhort, Rebuke, Comfort, Please them in your Discourse, where it will be for their advantage, or where it will not hinder or obstruct it.

Thus do to all in general, and to every one in particular. And as in case of Competition, ever the greatest Good is to be preferr'd; so if a Competition of Persons be, we are, *cæteris paribus*, to prefer the most; or if you say the best, that is true, but that is also because the most are concern'd in them: For a good and a wise Man is a publick Benefit, and of more value than numbers of others that are not so. Doing Good to the most, is also the greatest Good.

Lastly, In all the ways of imparting our Aid towards this, let us ever observe the Seasons when any Actions will probably contribute most to this Effect, and when they can best be done by us. This I would have especially observ'd, because Actions that are

materially good, and where we mean well, are often spoil'd by being mis-timed. As when Men are discoursing of their lawful secular Occasions, or entertaining each other with pleasant Diversions; then for any to make mention of things most Sacred and Venerable, this is importune and impertinent; and here is a good meaning lost by an in observance of Opportunity.

IV. I now proceed to the Arguments which perswade us thus, *as we have opportunity to do good unto all Men.*

First, To do thus is very agreeable to Nature: I am of their mind, who think Nature a trusty Guide, and make this the first and Sum of all their Precepts and Advices, to *follow Nature.* I do believe there is not one Command in the Gospel which is not a Branch from this Root, a Particular under this General.

I need not say that we are not to understand by Nature the Corruptions and Depravations of it: So many that declaim against Nature, interpret that Phrase, 1 *Cor.* 2. ψυχικὸς ἄνθρωπος, which should be rendred the *animal Man*, the Man that lives the Life of a mere Animal, one that hath not the Reason and Understanding of a Man.

By Nature therefore I understand here, 1. Nature in General. 2. Particularly that part of humane Nature, which is common to Man with inferior sorts of Beings. 3. That wherein he differs from, and excells them, and agrees with those that are better.

1. As

1. As for Nature in general, it is observable that all Beings do by their motions and operations conspire to the preserving of the Universe: that they do not more endeavour their own Good and Continuance, than the Good of the Whole. Nay, many times they leave their own proper Tendencies, and seem to neglect as it were their private Concerns, to promote the more Publick and Universal. This is so obvious to every Observation, and there are so many Instances of it in both animate and inanimate Bodies, that I need not insist upon it. I shall only mind you of another almost as common as this; that Animals of the same kind are loving and helpful to each other, and do not only associate and herd together, but will also expose themselves to danger for their mutual Defence, and other good Offices. But I go on further, and more particularly,

2. To that part of Nature which is in Man, common to him with other Animals, his Body; how does every Part minister to other, and all of them conspire to preserve and perfect the whole? How is Nourishment conveyed from one to another through the whole Body? And when it is thus with it, the Body is in its natural good State of Health: If it be otherwise, if one Part draw all the Nourishment to it self, it is then diseased, and this tends to the Dissolution of the whole, and consequently of that Part it self which does not distribute.

Add to this what the Naturaliſts have obſerv'd, that no Paſſion is more agreeable to Man's Body than *Love*, which is the Principle of doing Good; that nothing contributes more to his Health, nor is a more certain Argument of it, than Good-will; that the very Body of Man is never in better State, than when he is moſt inclined to do good Offices; And that the Motions which maintain Life are then moſt equally vigorous, when we are in the Exerciſe of Charity and Compaſſion.

3. This is no leſs congruous to the Nature of Man, as diſtinguiſhed from all other Animals, it is agreeable to the Mind and Reaſon of Man. Hear the Sence of an honeſt Heathen, which is the Voice of Nature, not of Revelation. Saith he to his Friend. *Qui tibi amicus eſt, ſcito hunc omnibus amicum eſſe.* Again, *Non ſum uni angulo natus, Patria mea eſt totus hic Mundus.* Nor was it only one, but many of the Philoſophers, that called themſelves Citizens of the World, not that they forgot their Native Country, but they remembred their Relation to the whole: They look'd on themſelves in the ſame order to the Univerſe, which others do to the Town where they were born and dwell.

Again; *Poſterorum rationem habet.* He did not content himſelf to be a Benefactor to the preſent Age, but would take care alſo that thoſe that ſhould be born after, ſhould receive advantage by his Labours, and ſo they have. *Lucan* ſays of *Cato*, and as ma-

ny

ny as ſpeak of him ſay the ſame:

Hi mores, hæc dura immota Catonis
Secta fuit, ſervare modum, finemq; tenere,
Naturamq; ſequi, Patriæq; impendere vitam,
Non ſibi ſed toti genitum ſe credere Mundo.

Thus we ſee Nature taught the very Heathens. And I do the more willingly inſiſt on this Argument from Nature, becauſe I cannot think that the God of Nature, being alſo the Author of our Religion, ſhould make this inconſiſtent with that, or deſtructive of it: And becauſe by this means we ſhall have a great aſſiſtance both in the underſtanding of our Duty, and in making us willing to do it. Had this been duly obſerv'd, Men had never ſacrificed their Sons to *Moloch*. And if this be received, one of the greateſt Objections againſt our being Religious vaniſhes.

In general then: If it be natural for the Soul of Man, before it be corrupted with any of thoſe Paſſions, that are the off-ſpring of Folly, to obſerve and be affected with the welfare and ill State of others, beſides it ſelf. If it be diſpleaſed and unquiet, and griev'd when it goes ill with them, and joyed and delighted to ſee them in good Plight; then it's natural to it, to will and endeavour their good and welfare.

The Underſtanding of Man is a large and unlimited kind of thing, it reaches forth it ſelf to all Beings, and views them; and wherever it ſees Good, it loves and deſires

ſires the continuance; and when it obſerves Evil, it's troubled and wiſhes it were not, and will endeavour it may not be. And if this be natural to the Mind of Man, unaltered by wicked Practices, and fooliſh Paſſions; then it is natural to it to do good univerſally, and then certainly to all Mankind.

Again; it's natural to the Soul of Man to love Pleaſure, and to purſue it, and to be averſe from whatſoever diſpleaſes it. Now nothing can be the object of Pleaſure but Good: or, if any Evil be, 'tis only in order to what is Good, and as it ſerves that, *i. e.* as it is good in Reality.

No Man can be delighted to ſee any Beings in an ill Plight; or if he be, he is in an unnatural ſtate himſelf, and his Soul is corrupted.

More particularly and diſtinctly: If we underſtand by natural, that which proceeds from an inward Principle, and which tends to preſerve and perfect Nature in general: and particularly that which is a Concluſion deriv'd from Principles of Reaſon and clear Diſcourſes, (for that's natural to Man which is rational); then I will uſe this Method to evince, that all this which is here required, is agreeable to Nature in general, and to humane Nature in Particular.

1*ſt*. It's natural for us to be acting. If we either conform to the reſt of the Beings we live with in the World, or act agreeably to our own Natures, we muſt be doing. The beſt Philoſophers aſſure us, that in the vaſt Univerſe there is not one little Particle that

that is idle, but the World, and all in it, are in unceſſant motion; tho' ſome Bodies that move more ſlowly and leſs diſcernibly than others, are ſaid to be at reſt.

Whether we climb up into Heaven, or dive into the Sea, or dig into the Bowels of the Earth, we ſhall find all Beings employed and buſy, nothing idle. The Heavenly Bodies are whirling about perpetually, the Waters ceaſe not to run; and in the Caverns of the Earth, which might be imagined the dens of Sleep, yet the Mines are made. And Plants tho' they move not from, yet in their place they do, as we underſtand by their growth. Animals, their very Life and Senſe is Motion; their very make and nature inclines them to Action.

Particularly, Man is endued with ſo many inſtruments of Action, and ſuch a Power and Principle of Motion, that it is very much againſt his natural Propenſion, if he be not in Action. We neither ſhould nor can be idle and unactive. Whoſoever conſiders the many active Powers in Man, will be of this Opinion.

It's alſo agreeable to Reaſon, that we ſhould uſe Diligence, take pains, have a buſineſs: becauſe no great thing can be done without difficulty; without diligence, nothing conſiderable is ever done, and every thing is done with it.

Beſides; We cannot expect to do well without Pains and Care: For tho' Evil may come through an Omiſſion and Negligence, yet an Intenſion of all our Powers,

a vigilance and industry is necessary to our doing Good. Our observation of our selves will assure us of this, because all Beginnings are difficult, and the greater any Actions are, the more attention and diligence they require.

2. It's no less natural for a Man to *do Good*; for, he can do nothing but that which he thinks so.

If it be objected, that it's also natural to do Evil. I would answer, that we do not terminate there, it's only in order to do some Good, and then that Evil is truly good, doth *induere rationem boni.* Indeed if Man should do Evil universally, he must destroy himself; but that's unnatural.

3. But is it natural also to do Good to others, to Men? I answer. If it be natural to do Good to our selves, it is natural also to do so to others, because we depend on them. We stand in need of others to do us Good, and cannot live without them. We also wish that all other Men would do us Good, and must imagine that every other Man desires the same. Besides; we know Men best, and can therefore do them most Good: They also are of our kind, and are most like to us of all other Animals; and therefore if we love our selves, we must love them. Add to all this, that all other Beings within our Compass, they are capable of greatest Happiness and Misery: and therefore its very reasonable we should do Good to them, since they may be exalted so high, or depressed so low; be in so very

good, or ſo very ill a Condition. Inferiour Beings deſerve not our Pains to do them Good, ſince they can neither be happy or unhappy, as Man can be.

4. And on the ſame account we muſt do Good to *all Men* without Exception. For,

(1.) Some of the Reaſons mention'd, hold for all as well as for any.

(2.) We may do ſome Good in ſome kind to all (tho it be only in hearty Wiſhes and Deſires) and we ſhould do all the Good we can. And,

(3.) All the Exceptions that can be made againſt this, are Arguments for it: the moſt material are, that many Men are uſeleſs, or evil, or Enemies to us, and this gives us a further Reaſon to do Good, becauſe there is greater want of it.

5. To Chriſtians. It's natural to love thoſe beſt, that are beſt; and ſuch are Profeſſors and Practicers of the beſt Religion in the World. Now that this is natural, and reaſonable, appears,

(1.) Becauſe they are publick Goods: The World is the better for every honeſt Man; his Prayer, his Example, his Counſel are full of Advantages. They therefore, being better than others, ought principally to be regarded. To do Good to one Good Man, is a compendious way to do Good to many.

(2.) They will not fail to make Retribution. The Law of Gratitude is deeply engraven in the Heart of every honeſt Man.

What

What we do to them therefore will return into our own Bosom; we shall be the better for the Good we do to them.

(3.) They have many Enemies. Thus it was when this Epistle was writ, and thus it is to this day. The *World hates you*, saith our Saviour. The Reason is clear, If honest Men have many Enemies, that they should be Friends to one another.

(4.) We have better Opportunities of doing Good to them than to others. They are more capable of Counsel and Advice; more likely to be inclined and perswaded to Vertue, more to be influenced by good Example: so our Endeavours are likely to be more effectual with them; therefore especially we are to do Good to them. But,

6. Why as we have Opportunity?

(1.) We are weak and insufficient of our selves, and have need of Assistance from abroad; we shall do well to take in all Aids, to observe the fittest Season, that what we do, may be to purpose. For, as I have said, we shall do more, and with less Trouble, and surer Success, when we strike in with Opportunity.

(2.) Opportunity is both short and uncertain, therefore by no means neglect it. Our Time is very short; but the time of doing Good is much shorter. Thus I have summarily represented the Reasonableness and Naturalness of our doing Good, *&c.* I shall also shew that,

Secondly; This is very ageeable to all true Religion that ever has been, and is manifestly

nifeſtly the great Deſign of the Chriſtian in particular.

As for Religion in general; It is not (as too many miſtake it) merely a Syſtem of Opinions, or a Company of Articles which ſtay us in Theory and Contemplation; nor is it a Ritual of Formalities and Ceremonies: It's no empty Name, nor uſeleſs thing; but that which is really Good, and makes us ſo; it makes every one better that has it, better in and to himſelf, and to his Relations; better Governours, and better Subjects; better Fathers, and better Children; better Maſters, and better Servants. It makes every one better, both to himſelf, and to the World.

The Religion of the Jews (however miſtaken by themſelves, yet) made good Proviſion for an univerſal Love, when it ſo often and expreſly required a great Kindneſs to *Strangers*, and puts them in mind of their own Condition in *Egypt*, and the hard Uſage they met with there, *Exod.* 22. 21.

The very Sabbath, which was for a Sign and a Diſtinction between the Jews and other Nations, yet provided alſo for the *Reſt* of the *Strangers*. And *Exod.* 23. 4, 5. they are commanded to do good Offices to their *Enemy*, in bringing back his *ſtrayed Ox*, and in helping his over-burdened *Aſs*.

And certainly whoever conſiders that Religion, will ſay that it was never intended by the wiſe Author of it to be ſuch an Hedg and Fence of Separation, as the Pride and

and ill Nature of its Profeſſors had made it. Do not their holy Prophets every where recommended unto them Charity and Beneficence? Was not this ever of more account with God than all Burnt-Offerings and Sacrifices? How did this procure Acceptance for thoſe Offerings? Inſomuch that when they were ſeparated from this, they could not be accepted; *Iſa.* 1. 11, 12, 13, &c. *To what purpoſe is the Multitude of your Sacrifices to me? ſaith the Lord,* &c. Chap. 58. 6. *Is not this the Faſt that I have choſen, to looſe the Bands of Wickedneſs, to undo the heavy Burdens, and to let the Oppreſſed go free,* &c.? Mich. 6. 6, 7, 8. *Wherewith ſhall I come before the Lord, and bow my ſelf before the high God? ſhall I come before him with Burnt-Offerings,* &c.? *He has ſhewed thee, O Man, what is Good.*

But for our Chriſtian Religion, its manifeſt Deſign is, that we ſhould *do Good to all*: St. *James* 1.27. *Pure Religion, and undefiled before God, is this, to viſit the Fatherleſs and Widows in their Afflictions.* 1 Tim. 1. 5. *The End of the Commandment* (τῆς παραγγελίας) *is Charity out of a pure Heart, and a good Conſcience, and Faith unfeigned.* So that God eſteems himſelf moſt honoured, and Men to be religious in the higheſt degree, when they are beneficent. More particularly;

1. Chriſtianity takes away all ſeparating and dividing Ceremonies, that were as Walls of Partition, and ſo intends the proſelyting of all Men without Diſtinction: And does not this tend to lay on them the greateſt

test Engagements to an universal Good-will?

2. It has taken great care to remove all Obstacles of this, and has made it the necessary Condition of being happy. We must love all Men, and do them good, tho they be wicked, tho they be our Enemies. *Love your Enemies*, &c. says our Saviour. And *if ye forgive not Men their Trespasses, neither will your Heavenly Father forgive yours.*

3. The Representations the Gospel has made of God and our Saviour, whom we are instructed and obliged to follow, will engage us to do Good universally. Our Saviour *went about doing Good*; He loved his Enemies to Death, he laid down his Life for them, he requited the greatest Malice with the greatest Love. God is described as loving the World, and that with the greatest, truest, heartiest Love that can be. He *does Good unto all*, his *Sun rises* upon the Wicked as well as the Good.

If then it be our Duty, our Perfection and Happiness, to conform to our Saviour's Example; if by this we come to the utmost that our Natures can reach to, to be like God, whose Mercy extends to all things: Let us also love and do Good to Enemies, to Strangers, to all Men.

Were there those among the Heathens, that had only the Light of Nature, and yet both taught and practised this Duty of Beneficence in so high a degree? and shall not we Christians who have the Revelation of the Gospel, we who read of the e-

eternal *Son of God* deveſting himſelf of the *Glory he had with God before the World was*, and taking our frail Nature into Union with himſelf, learn and practiſe it much more? Are we not told what the Bleſſed Jeſus did, and how much he ſuffered in Life and Death, and all this, that he might redeem Mankind from Sin, and Death, and Hell, and make us happy?

Was this the Deſign and Buſineſs of his Life and Death to do the greateſt Good to all Men? Let us make it appear, that we are indeed his Diſciples, in that we carry on the ſame Deſign which he did, and follow his Example in *doing Good*.

This is ſo neceſſary a part of Chriſtianity, that if I were to give a Character of a Chriſtian in ſhort, it ſhould be this, *He is one that deſigns and doth Good unto all Men*. Catholick Charity makes a Man a Member of the Catholick Church. Holding of the Catholick Faith is not ſo ſure a Mark of a Chriſtian, as living in Univerſal Love; whoſoever doth ſo, is a Chriſtian: he that doth not, is none; no, tho he can repeat his Creed, and think he believes every Article of it, it is not ſo material as this univerſal Inclination of doing Good: if it is not ſo material in order to our Acceptance with God, what our Opinions are, as what our Affections and Lives are.

This is final and ultimate in Religion, that which God deſign'd to bring Men unto by all the Revelations which he has made, and by all his Inſtitutions. All true Religion that has

has ever been in the World, has aim'd at this, to make Men better, wiser, and more vertuous; And why is this but in order to Action? And do we, or can we act only about our selves? If we be better, shall it not be better for other Men? Can a Man be good to himself singly, and not to Society? Or, does Religion intend the Good of private Persons, and not of Communities? Assuredly that which designs to make Men good to themselves, designs to make them good to others.

That Man is most truly Religious, who gives most Honour to God; and he does that, who makes the most true and worthy Representation of him to the World; and he does that, who is universally good and kind: Not he who macerates his Flesh with fasting, or wears out his Knees with long and frequent Praying, or spends the greatest part of his time in Hearing or Reading, or denies himself the useful and innocent Pleasures of Life and Conversation; that turns Recluse or Hermite, that goes a long Pilgrimage bare-foot, that exposes himself to pinching Cold, or scorching Heat, that calls for *Fire from Heaven* upon the wicked Transgressors of the Law: Not any of these, or others, that pass for the only Religious Men in the World, make so clear, and true, and becoming a Representation of God to the World, as that poor Man does, whose only Design it is to do *Good unto all*, who makes it his great Business to be innocent and useful to every one in the World.

This Man's Life ſhall do more, to make other Men entertain true and honourable Thoughts of God, than all the Devotions and Fervors of them, who confine their Religion to ſuch Paſſions and Exerciſes. Nor can all Faith and Knowledg have ſuch an effect upon others, to make them glorify God, as the Life of this good Man who does Good.

Laſtly; Nothing can make us more ſure of, and fit for the Happineſs of Heaven than this: As nothing can make us more like to God and Chriſt, and the good Angels, than this Divine Temper of Love to Mankind; ſo nothing more fits us for, nor more aſſures of their Converſe in Heaven. Indeed this ſeems not ſo much a neceſſary Condition of the Happineſs of that State, as an eſſential Ingredient in it, and a great part of it. The great Change which I apprehend will be in Heaven, from what is here on Earth, is this, That our ſelfiſh contracted Love will be enlarged and extended; and that there we ſhall every one love all.

By what has been hitherto ſaid, it may appear ſufficiently, that nothing better becomes, or is more worthy of us, either as Men following the Principles of Nature, or as Chriſtians enlightned by revealed Religion, than to be univerſally good. But I ſhall argue this further by ſhewing, that,

3. To *do Good to all Men*, &c. is one of thoſe means which are as well neceſſary as available to the attaining of all thoſe Ends which

which Wiſdom can deſign. It will much conduce to their Accompliſhment, and they cannot be obtained without it.

The Ends which Wiſdom aims at are, the good State of a Man's ſelf in particular, and of the World in general. That's ill Nature miſguided by Folly, which intends more Evil than Good, or Evil not in order to Good. That which only deſigns a particular Good, without regard to the more common, is Subtilty, Craft, and Selfiſhneſs; but only that is Wiſdom, which deſigns the Welfare of particulars, and the Community too.

It is ſaid of *Solomon*, that he was a Man of a *large Heart*, as *the Sand on the Sea*. And Wiſdom is called φιλάνθρωπον πνεῦμα, a *loving Spirit*; and is ſaid to *have his Delights with the Sons of Men*; Prov. 8. 31. It gives a Man an Aptitude, a Largeneſs of Heart, and Greatneſs of Mind. Now where there is Love, and that not contracted and pent up in a narrow Soul, it will deſire the Welfare of all.

This then being ſuppoſed, that Wiſdom aims at the good Eſtate of the Man himſelf, and of others, as it is certainly true; and therefore we never ſay any Man deſigns wiſely who intends Miſchief, but only he who deſigns Good, or a particular and leſs Evil in order to a common and greater Good.

Theſe being the Ends which Wiſdom propoſes, what more accommodate means can be choſen for attaining this End, than

to do the Good that is within our Power? Nothing more natural than to be doing that which we wish should be, and that our Endeavours accompany our Wishes. And tho I cannot say that every particular Man's Endeavours are necessary to the Welfare of the Publick, because the All-wise Providence hath taken care that the Publick Good shall not depend on so great an Uncertainty, as is every single Man's Goodness of himself, yet whosoever doth not cast in his Mite into the publick Treasury, he so far diminishes and takes off from the Publick Good. And however, doing Good to others is absolutely necessary to his own Good State: Tho my Endeavours may not be necessary for the Good of others, they are for my own.

It remains then that I shew in particular, that this is one of those means, which are both effectual and necessary to the attaining of whatever Wisdom can aim at, either as to a Man's own particular, or the World in general.

When a Man considers himself throughly, he considers both his Reference to this, and to the future Life. And he that intends wisely for himself, he principally intends the Welfare of his Soul, the good State of his Mind, and that his Body may be in a Condition to serve that, and all other things contributing to the Welfare of both.

Particularly, he proposes to his aim Knowledg, Religion and Vertue, Tranquillity

quillity and Pleasure, Life and Health, a good Name and a competent Estate. And true Wisdom, that *loving Spirit*, will design for others as for it self.

Now to do good universally is the best, and a very sure, plain and short way, both to get and to keep these things both for our selves and others.

First; It is the way to the best Knowledg. For,

1. He that's bent to do all the Good he can to Men, will be diligent to get Knowledg, that he may be able to inform others. None that considers, but knows this to be one of the great Excellencies of Man, and that we cannot be more useful to each other, than by communicating useful Truths: For, by this means we direct the Ignorant, and perhaps erring Travellers; nay, we open the *Eyes of the Blind*, we give *Light to them that sit in Darkness*. In short, by this we lay the Foundation of Vertue and Peace; and there's no Man but knows this, that Knowledg is one of the best Gifts that one Man can give or communicate to another.

He therefore that's resolved to do all the Good he can, will earnestly seek after that Knowledg, which will be so beneficial to others as well as himself: and he doth not only seek it for the Improvement of his own Mind, but hath this further Inducement to search after it, that he may be more beneficial to other Men. He doth now not only study, as *Seneca* saith, *Ut proficiat*

ficiat, ſed ut proſit; not only to better himſelf, but others alſo. Nor is he only ingaged to ſtudy; but,

2. Is alſo determin'd to ſeek after that Knowledg which is beſt, which is moſt uſeful, and brings the greateſt Benefits with it. He that ſteers the Courſe of his Studies by a deſign of doing Good, will not ſpend his time in Trifles and Curioſities, in idle and empty Speculations, in groundleſs Conjectures, and endleſs Diſquiſitions. His purſuit is not after any piece of uſeleſs Learning; and all that he counts ſuch, which doth not make him wiſer or better, which doth not help him to direct his Life, to govern his Paſſions by Reaſon and Vertue, to quiet his Mind, to preſerve his Health, and rid him of ill Circumſtances, and be ſome way uſeful to other Men. And then,

3. He will be very communicative of what he knows, and there is no better way to get, to keep, to improve Knowledg, than to communicate it. The liberal Soul will not, Uſurer-like, hoard up Knowledg, and applaud himſelf, that he knows ſuch and ſuch matters, of which others are ignorant: No, but he takes a Pleaſure in the Information of others, and heartily endeavours to make them as wiſe as himſelf: and whilſt he inſtructs them, he refreſhes his own Notions, and preſerves a Memory of them. And indeed this Furniture of Souls is like that of Houſes, if it be kept cloſe and unuſed, it grows mouldy, and Moth or Ruſt corrupt it: whereas if commonly uſed,

and

and open to common ſight, it's preſerv'd.

This is the Sum; An earneſt deſign of doing the Good we can to other Men, will engage us to ſeek after Knowledg, after the beſt and moſt uſeful; and when we have got it, to communicate it to others, and in all theſe ways increaſes it in our ſelves.

Secondly; To do Good unto all Men, is the way to be truly religious. Religion, or to have a due regard to God, this is certainly one of the greateſt Perfections of Man's Mind: It's that wherein we manifeſtly excel all the Creatures of this lower World, and is the moſt ſpiritual divine Quality in the Soul of Man. Beſides, it is impoſſible we ſhould be happy without it: for, if it be neceſſary to our Happineſs, that we think truly of, and be rightly affected to things in which we are leſs concern'd, 'tis abſolutely neceſſary that we have right Apprehenſions of, and befitting Affections to God, who is offered to our Thoughts ſo often, and with whom we always are, the Knowledg of whom is *Eternal Life.*

For the clearing of this, I will not now ſhew how great a part of Religion doing Good is, becauſe I have already diſcours'd that. But I will ſhew what Influence a Life of univerſal Love and Goodneſs muſt have to make us think well and truly of God, and live in a due regard to him.

In general therefore, this Life of Benevolence and univerſal Good-will helps us to a better, that is, a clearer and more certain

and

and ſenſible Knowledg of the Goodneſs of God, and thereby engages us to love him, and truſt in him.

The Man who in his Diſpoſition and Practice is beneficent, he feels this to be the beſt State of all others; and conſequently will attribute it to him, who is the beſt and happieſt of all Beings.

He who lays the Foundation of what he believes concerning God in Teſtimony only, his Soul may be filled with Doubts, he may queſtion, whether he rightly underſtands what he reads or hears; at leaſt, he cannot be ſo ſenſibly and fully aſſured of it, as he that builds upon his own Senſe and Feeling.

Some ſay, and not without very good Reaſon, that none can know what God is, who are not themſelves *Partakers of the Divine Nature*. And the Scripture gives Countenance to this Opinion, in ſuch Paſſages as theſe; *Bleſſed are the pure in Heart; for they ſhall ſee God. Without Holineſs no Man ſhall ſee God.* Which places imply, that Purity and Holineſs (which is a Participation of the Divine Nature) are the neceſſary Qualifications of thoſe that ſhall know God. A Divine Life is a Prerequiſite, a Preparative to Divine Knowledg. And our Saviour tells them, *if they will do God's Will, they ſhall know his Doctrine.* A vertuous good Life is certainly the beſt Preparation, and doth moſt diſpoſe the Soul to the Reception of all Truths, but more particularly of that which concerns God, and ſpiritual Matters.

This

This also gives further Credit to that Assertion, That most or all Mens Opinions of God, are founded in their own Life and Temper. And there's good reason it should be so: For, generally Men like themselves, and approve of what they do; and all in their Reasonings attribute that which they think good to God, who is absolutely so.

Hence it is that the wicked profane Man thinks God like himself, and that he doth not detest, nor will punish Sin, any more than he. Or, if he cannot think thus of God, as it's strange a Man should; then he thinks there is no God. And indeed, Observation, as well as Reason, will teach us; that a wicked Life is the compendious way to Atheism. He that lives ill, either thinks there is no God, or thinks falsly of him: for, true Knowledg of God, and a vicious Life, cannot consist any more than Light and Darkness.

Again; Others, Men of severe, austere Humours, and of angry and malicious Tempers, conceive God to be as they are. And the Man of a benign Mind, he accounts Love and Goodness the most essential Property of God: which he therefore does, because his own Sense and Experience, in Conjunction with Reason and Scripture, and the Consent of other Men, assure him, past all doubt, that this is the best Temper, and that no Life can be so good as that of Love and Benignity; and thence he firmly concludes this must be the Nature, the Life of God himself.

This

This Senſe, as I ſaid, takes away all that Obſcurity and thoſe Doubts which might remain, notwithſtanding all that is revealed in Scripture, or diſcourſed by Reaſon, or reported by other Men. For we might ſuſpect that we miſunderſtood the Text, or that our Reaſon were ſhort, being converſant in Divine Matters, and the Teſtimony of Men leaves room for doubting; but what we feel, we cannot doubt.

But the Man of Good-will he cannot in the leaſt queſtion, whether the Life of *Benevolence* be not the *beſt*, and conſequently the *Divine Life*. And this will engage him to give God the Worſhip that's due to him, that is, to love and truſt him. He that knows and feels the Goodneſs of God, he muſt love him and truſt in him; and then, and not till then, is God worſhipped in the Soul, when he is loved and truſted in.

Particularly, this Man of univerſal Good-will, when he views the Creation of God, and beholds how good he made all Things, and with how great Wiſdom he conducts them all to the end of their Beings, their utmoſt Perfection and chief Excellence.

More eſpecially, when he conſiders in what Condition and Place God hath ſet Man, to be Lord of this inferior World; how he hath given him an Underſtanding, in the uſe of which he may enjoy God and himſelf, and all things, and may make his Abode here eaſie and delightful to him, and may, by the uſe of his Reaſon, and the Government of himſelf according to the

Rules

Rules of Vertue, raiſe himſelf above the Calamities of this State, and may ſerve himſelf and his Happineſs of all that befals him; may make the moſt unhappy Circumſtances he can be in, ſerviceable to his beſt Intereſts. When he conſiders all theſe Wonders of Goodneſs that appear in the Creation and Providence of God, he adores this great Benefactor, and praiſes the great Creator, and Preſerver, and Governour of the World.

And when he further conſiders thoſe aſtoniſhing Paſſages of Divine Goodneſs in the Redemption of the World by Chriſt, and ſees the Good that hath come to Men by that miraculous Incarnation of the *Son of God*, by his Life and Death, his Doctrine and his Works; and the great Good that was deſign'd, and how God is never wanting to do all, that on his part is to be done for the attaining it, this fills him with Love and Wonder, and makes him break forth in Praiſes of the Divine Philanthropy.

And when this good Man is endeavouring the Good and Welfare of others, but finds his Attempts unſucceſsful, and his Power too ſhort, that he cannot do the Good he deſires, then doth he ſend out his earneſt Longings to Heaven, that Almighty Power would ſupply his Defects, and do that Good to the World, which he would, but cannot.

God is not by ſuch an one call'd upon to deſtroy, but mend the World. He doth not pray for *Fire from Heaven*, to conſume them

them that oppose him, but for the good Spirit of God to convince and change them. God is not then worshipped, when he is invoked to assist *bitter Zeal* and Anger, and to execute the Designs of Malice and Cruelty: No, then God is worshipped, and truly represented, when we seek to him, and depend on him for help in carrying on good and charitable Designs, in being universally useful and beneficial: For, then we shew that we think him benign and kind, and we do profess by this our Perswasion, that 'tis his Design and great Work to do Good to the World. And this is the truest and most honourable Representation of God, and the best Worship we can give him. No Fear or Horrour is such an Acknowledgment of God, as he will accept and own, or look on himself as honoured, and worthily represented by: No, the Devils *believe and tremble*; but they that believe and love, are the true Worshippers, such as God is pleased with.

In short: Nothing makes a Man so truly Religious, as a through Belief and Sense of the Goodness of God; and nothing so fully assures him that God is good in general, and will be so to him in particular, as being himself good and loving: For this assures him, it is the best Life that can be lived, and must therefore be the Life of God. And it is natural for all Men to expect to be dealt with themselves, as they deal with others, and that if they be *merciful, they shall obtain Mercy.*

I

I have shewn, that to do Good to all Men, is the way to make Men themselves Religious. I add, it is the way to make others so too. This is the way to adorn the Doctrine of our Saviour, to honour our Profession, to make Men entertain the Gospel heartily, when the Professors of it are universally beneficent and good; when they see them just and charitable, hospitable and liberal, and communicative in all good things.

Prayers and Praises, Retirement and Devotion, then are reverenced, when they go attended with a great retinue of good Works: but when Piety appears alone, it's no other than a Ghost and Specter that affrights and amazes; and when it is accompanied with Injustice and Uncharitableness, with Inhumanity and sordid filthy Avarice, then is it blasphem'd and evil spoken of; And Men are afraid to entertain that Religion which keeps so ill Company. And if these be the Effects of Praying and Fasting, of Solitariness and Reading, to make Men morose and ill natur'd, and rigorous Exactors of all Punctilio's of Duty, and severe Punishers of every little Offence, and stingy, selfish and inconversible, they will flee from it.

If they that worship God, have no regard for Men; if that Zeal which flames up to Heaven, set this lower World on fire, and fill it with Smoak, all Men will be afraid of it, and use all Arts to quench it.

But

But on the other hand, when we ſee Piety toward God, and Charity toward Men, go hand in hand; when they that ſay, they love God, love Man alſo; and they that live in *Communion with the Father and the Son*, live alſo in Fellowſhip with their Brethren; when they that ask Pardon of God for their own Faults, forgive other Mens toward them, and are condeſcending, and meek, and patient, and communicative to their Fellow-Creatures, as they deſire God ſhould be to them; and becauſe they pray he would be thus to them, are therefore more ſo to others: then do they win others to their Profeſſion, by their good Converſation, and bring in many Proſelytes to their Religion.

For, it is not Names and Profeſſions, not Formalities and Shews, not Opinions and Phraſes, not ſingular Conceits and uncommon Practices, that will commend us to God, or our Religion to Men: but Good Works and Kindneſs, to be communicative and loving: theſe things will beget in them an Eſteem of our Profeſſion, and give a Luſtre to the Religion we own.

In this caſe, Religion is like an excellent Diamond, well ſet; but in the other, it is a Diamond in a Dunghil. When Men *ſee* and feel *our good Works, then do they glorify our Father which is in Heaven.*

Thus we ſee how Religion, and a due regard to God, is promoted by this Temper of Univerſal Love and Charity.

Thirdly;

Thirdly; To be good to all hath a great Influence on us to make us Vertuous. An universal Benevolence is a Spring from whence all the Streams of Vertue run forth, which gives them both beginning, and continuance, and increase.

In general, this will make us both active and moderate. It will both engage us to action, and keep us within due Bounds, that we shall neither do too little nor too much.

Some of the Principal Causes, why Men do not practise Vertue, are,

1. That they are sluggish and unactive, not quickned by any Affection. Or,

2. They are overborn with the violent assaults of evil Passions, not governed by Love, as Anger, &c. Or,

3. Their Love is particular and confined.

Now where an universal Good-will obtains, it removes all these Obstacles, and,

1. Makes us active and diligent in all ways of doing Good.

2. It regulates all the other Passions, and suffers them not to exceed their Bounds: that is, they are always made to serve its designs. Both Anger and Hatred it self are in order to doing Good. And Men that live by this Principle, do not do any Evil for it self, but as it conduces to some greater Good. And,

3. It sets Love at liberty from those restraints, which by being too particular, it was under before: And so prevents those

numberless Vices and Immoralities, which arise from a selfish and too contracted Love. I think most of our Miscarriages in Life proceed from an undue Preference of our selves, and an unequal considering other Men's Interests; and the way to rid our selves of them, is to follow the Apostle's Counsel; *not only to mind our own things, but also the things of others*, and here, *to do good to all Men.*

This gives that greatness and largeness of Mind, in which true Generosity and bravery of Spirit does consist. This Lover of the World, goes on steadily in his way of well-doing, and is not stopp'd by Injuries or Affronts, nor reduced by particular Respects. His mind is not only taken up with his own particular Concerns, but he has regard to his Brethren, and his Affection makes him call not only the Disciples of Christ, but all the Sons of *Adam* by this Name.

And this is Generosity and Nobleness indeed, to pass by Offences, and pardon Injuries, and to requite Evil with Good. And is not that a great Mind which embraces the World in its Arms, and takes the Universe into its Bosom? This is Divine and God-like.

¶ Particularly, There is scarce any Vertue, but universal Beneficence doth one way or other beget or increase it. ¶

1. No Man can be wise and prudent who doth not take into his Consideration the Community: and he that does and intends the Good of Mankind, steers a Course directly betwixt

betwixt Folly and Mischievous Cunning. He is neither amongst those that have none, or Evil, or but little petty Designs. No, this Man hath proposed to himself one, and that an excellent good and great end, the Good of Mankind, and he takes the proper fit means for the attaining it, to do as much as he can. Thus available is doing *Good to all*, to Prudence. Besides; this Practice will give a Man a great insight into particular Mens affairs, and an understanding of many things and circumstances, which is necessary, and will much contribute to Discretion and prudent Determination. And;

2. Justice is no less beholden to it. It's impossible that Man should be Just, who doth not intend other Mens Good as well as his own, and all Mens as well as some, and most to those that are best. But where the Hand that's stretch'd out to all, holds the Ballance, there probably will be no Deceit in the Weight; it will not give advantage to one scale wherein his own or Friends concerns are, but that wherein the Publick is, will certainly out-weigh with him.

That Man who is bent on doing Good to the World, will be Just; for all Corruption of Justice is founded on preference of private Respects before the publick Good. Let Men be Publick-spirited, and aim at the good State of the Community, and they are antidoted against Injustice. Those that regard other Mens Concerns as well as their own, will not advance themselves upon their Ruins, nor grasp at all, and leave

nothing for their Neighbour, but weigh his Conveniences as well as their own: and they that conſider the Publick, and deſign the welfare of Mankind, will not violate thoſe Rules, that are ſo neceſſary to Society, and the order of the World.

This Man that carries Mankind in his thoughts, and hath Good-will for every one, cannot be unjuſt to any, cannot defraud or circumvent, or do any thing that's miſchievous to them, or the Publick. He is not biaſs'd by ſelf-Intereſt, nor will he heap his favours upon his Kindred, whilſt Men of greater Merit ſtarve. I do not ſay, that he hath no regard for his Relations, or that he is more kind to Strangers than to his Acquaintance and Friends; for that is a fooliſh Niceneſs, and a piece of unnatural Policy, which the Man of univerſal Good-will cannot be obnoxious to. But the beſt and moſt uſeful Man, whether a-Kin to him or not, ſhall be preferred by him. He that can be kind to all, cannot but be juſt to all.

I cannot better repreſent this Man, than by thoſe Motions which the late Aſtronomers attribute to the Earth; it moves ever both about its own Axis, and in the Ecliptick Circle, and from hence come the viciſſitudes of Day and Night, Summer and Winter, to the ſeveral Inhabitants thereof: Thus the Good-man moves on his own Axis, and yet round the Ecliptick, aims at the good of the World as well as his own; and he that doth ſo, cannot be Unjuſt.

Tully

Tully tells us, that the first principle of Justice is, *Ne cui quis noceat, nisi lacessitus injuria*, Not to hurt any Man, except we be before provoked. But a Beneficent Temper will amplify and enlarge this Rule, or give us a clearer understanding of it, and add, That not in that case neither, except that will tend to a greater Good either to him, or me, or the Publick. And therefore *Seneca* saith: *Nemo prudens punit quia peccatum est, sed ne peccetur.* No prudent Man inflicts Punishment, because Evil is Committed; but that it may not be committed for the future.

I understand here by Justice also that Equity, which is sometimes opposed to it in common Speech; but is really the same thing.

3. Where this Principle is entertain'd and observed, it must necessarily inspire that Man with Courage and great Valour.

There are two things which ordinarily make the Pusillanimous Valiant. *First*, when they are engaged in a good Cause. 2*dly*, when they are joyn'd with great Aids. Both these concur here.

1. This Man, that is ever on design of doing Good to the Universe, hath a good Cause, and he knows it. He is assured he is doing well, and that which will justifie it self to every Impartial Considerer. He himself cannot have the least scruple about what he doth; nor can any other Man justly, or with any colour of Reason, tax him, who is on such publick Service. He that can say he is doing Good to the Community, and

that this is the buſineſs of this Life, he hath prevented all Calumny, and is as blameleſs as harmleſs. And when he conſiders how clear his own Deſigns are; how accountable his Actions, this will make him encounter dangers and difficulties, and aſſault all oppoſition that would hinder him from effecting what he aims at. He thinks with himſelf, that if it were his own private concerns only that ingag'd him, or ſome particular Intereſt that he ſerv'd, then others might have ſome Plea to oppoſe; but when he intends the Good of Mankind, and in the good Offices he doth to particular Men, is ſwayed by a reſpect to the Publick, he knows none can have a better, a more allowable and commendable Employment. Beſides this,

2. He hath good aſſurance of Aſſiſtance, and he ſhall be enabled to overcome the oppoſition he meets with. He hath God, and all the good Beings in the World, to take his Part; it's the deſign of infinite Goodneſs to do Good to Mankind; it is the Employment of Bleſſed Angels, to ſerve the great Intereſts of Man's Happineſs. The Bleſſed Jeſus, to whom *all Power in Heaven and Earth is given*, was, whilſt he was here on Earth, and is, now in the State of his Exaltation, carrying on the grand deſign of Man's Happineſs. Nay, there is that in every Man, that is not degenerated into a Devil, that will take part and joyn in with him, who is bent to be an univerſal Benefactor. For, who can ſet themſelves without

without reluctance againſt him, who hath none other Deſign but to *do Good to All?* Nay rather, how is he the Object of every Man's Care? how ſafe is his Condition?

It is true, there are too many in the World, who are acted by a Spirit of Envy and Malice, who are ſelfiſh and contracted, who regard not others, but themſelves only: But what can theſe do againſt God and Nature, and all thoſe innumerable Miniſters of his, that are ready to do the Pleaſure of his Goodneſs? The Man of general Good-will, if his Eyes be opened, muſt ſay, that *more are they that are with him, than thoſe that are againſt him.*

Beſides, as I have ſaid, this Principle of univerſal Beneficence gives ſuch a Greatneſs of Mind to him that is acted by it, that he ſlights, and ſcorns, and makes nothing of all the little Difficulties and Dangers that he can conflict with. His Soul is ſo taken up with the greatneſs of his own Deſign, and is carried out with ſo much earneſtneſs in purſuit after it, that all the Things that might daunt or diſcourage him, make no Impreſſion of Fear on him at all.

4. This Principle, where it rules, muſt certainly reſtrain all Intemperance: For,

1. It will ſo much employ and buſy a Man, that he cannot be vacant enough for thoſe Extravagancies. No Man is intemperate, but he is firſt idle. Now he that hath entertain'd ſo univerſally an active Principle, as this of Good-will to All, he cannot ſpare Hours to throw away in intemperate Practi-

ces, which he ſees no way conduce to his End. Nay,

2. He will perceive them quite oppoſite and contrary to his End: For, both Obſervation and Reaſon will tell him, that whoſoever indulges himſelf in exceſs of bodily Pleaſures, he indiſpoſes, he diſables himſelf from doing Good. He that hath gorged himſelf with Meat, that hath inflamed his Blood with Drinking, or hath wallow'd in any other bodily Pleaſures, how careleſs is he of other Mens Concerns, indeed of his own, of any thing? *They drink Wine in Bowls, and forget the Afflictions of* Joſeph. And how impotent and unable is he to do the good Offices which he may have ſome deſire to do? He hath not the uſe of either Mind or Body, they are both diſabled from diſcharging their Functions. Nor indeed is it poſſible he ſhould; for, by Luxury and Softneſs, and Exceſſes of corporeal Gratifications, the Soul is made careleſs and inconſiderate, inordinate in its Deſires, and impatient of the leaſt Difficulty and Oppoſition; and the Body is rendred weak and feeble through want of Exerciſe, and Diſcaſes.

Thus I have ſhewn concerning the four, commonly called Cardinal Virtues, how they are befriended by this great Principle of doing Good to all. And every one will underſtand that Dependance which moſt of the other Virtues have on it, and how much it contributes to their Being and Growth.

This

This Man of universal Good-will, how full of Humanity and Courtesy is he even to Strangers, and those he knows not? What hearty Civility, and real Kindness doth he express to those that oppose his Interests, nay, that intend him Mischief? How gladly doth he pardon Injuries, and receive a repenting Enemy into his Bosom? How willing, nay, forward is he to lend to the Borrower? to give to the Indigent? And what he gives is from a liberal Hand, and a bountiful Mind; no grudging, no sparing appears in his Communications. He is as willing to take care of the Conveniences, as to relieve the Necessities of others; hath not only so much Charity as to keep them just from starving, but so much as will engage him to endeavour to make them happy.

And then for the lesser Offices, that are the Graces of Conversation, and make it pleasant, they derive from the same Original: For he, and he alone, that is set on doing Good to All, will be affable, and of easy Address by all.

He will not fail in giving all Expressions of Civility that are proper and natural; for the artificial and excessive, the Effects of Vanity and Hypocrisy, he uses them not. He hath the Civility of a Courtier, and the Heartiness of a Friend. In short, his Countenance, and Behavior, and Words to all, are such as you may read in them real Good-will.

I add only two more: This Man is humble and meek.

The true Cause, as well as the Effect and Consequence of most Mens Pride, is, that they consider few or none besides themselves. The proud Man therefore loves himself too much, because he loves not other Men at all: Whereas the Man who lives under the Power of this Principle, he values other Mens Merits as well as his own, and desires they may have the Praise due to them, and doth not think himself disparaged, when another is commended; or if by Accident that come to pass, he is not concern'd, because it's for the Good of the Man that is worthy, and of Mankind; and he can be content to sacrifice his own Credit to the Welfare of other Men, and the Publick.

In short, where a Man loves others, he desires that for them, which he doth for himself; and consequently, that they may have the Honour done them which they deserve, as he would not be debarr'd of the Praise he merits.

And for Meekness: This *Love covers a Multitude of Faults*, and so maketh those not to be which are; so far is it from multiplying and magnifying them, from increasing their Numbers and Aggravations. It doth not make Faults where they are not; or where they are, doth not make them worse; doth not call a little Wart, a Wen: but rather where they can be extenuated, lessens them; and considers which are the Mis-

Miscarriages of surprized Infirmity, and unwilling Mistake, and distinguishes between them and others.

Nor is he forward to take Vengeance, or eager to punish, but is a Man of Long-suffering and Forbearance, and will never punish but when it is the likeliest and almost only way to Amendment.

I have shewn how much the Principle of universal Beneficence conduces to Knowledg, Religion and Vertue. I now proceed to shew, how very available it is to our acquiring and keeping the rest of those good Things that make up the Happiness of Man.

And none that considers how essential doing Good is to the Religion of Christ, and how necessary to the Happiness of Man, will wonder that I insist so long on this Argument; for, tho I had the Tongue of Men and Angels, I could not sufficiently declare the Excellencies of this Divine Temper.

Fourthly; The next of those good Things I mention'd, which are in the Soul, are *Quiet* and *Tranquillity*, *Joy* and *Pleasure*, which I therefore join together in my Discourse, because they are not often parted in Nature, and their Opposits go under the same Name of Trouble; and because where they are as they should be, they qualify one another: For, that is a good and desirable Quiet, which is in order to, and attended with Joy; and that is an allowable Joy,

which doth not disturb the Soul, and rob the Mind of Peace. Whereas if these two destroy each other, they are not as they should be; nay, if they do not serve and befriend each other, they are blameable. For the Soul may be too much becalm'd, that it cannot move; its Powers may be frozen up by a Stoical Apathy, which will not only rid it of the evil and painful, but deprive it also of the good and pleasant Passions; that which doth thus, is very opposite to its Welfare.

Again; The Mind of Man may be transported with Joy, beyond the Bounds which Nature and Convenience have set, and so as to indispose it for doing that Good to it self or others it might do. But when those two concur and consist together, that is an excellent State indeed; for then a gentle Wind fills the Sails, and doth not raise the Waves, the Soul is then active and moderate.

And this State of Joy and Peace is the best State of which Souls are capable; 'tis the Crown of all our Works, the natural Reward of our Labours; and if our Actions be vertuous, 'tis a sure Reward: It is the End and Consummation of all, it is the Fruit and Flower that grows on them all.

And now I shall endeavour to shew how much the Principle of universal Goodness, where it's practis'd, and become a Temper, contributes to the Quiet and Pleasure of Souls.

Some

Some of the greateſt Cauſes of our Diſquiet are Malice and Envy, bitter Anger, and boundleſs Deſires, and Conſcience of Evil.

The malicious ſpiteful Man is upon the Wrack, as often as he cannot bring about his miſchievous Deſigns. He gnaſhes his Teeth, when he ſees God and Nature ſo to ſhelter and ſecure the Man againſt whom he hath ſet himſelf, that no Storms he can raiſe ſhall light on him.

The Envious is himſelf in torment, if other Men be not: As often as the Candle of God, the Sun, ſhines on, enlightens, and warms his Neighbour, it parches and burns him; and tho it be pleaſant to other Eyes to behold this Light, it makes his to ſmart, and puts them out.

The Angry Perſon is never quiet, is like the *troubled Sea, ever caſting up Mire and Dirt.* Every Wind cauſes the Waves to riſe, every Word caſts him into Diſorders, nay, Silence it ſelf will cauſe Commotions in him; ſo that Contraries have the ſame effect on this Subject, and his vitiated Palate is diſguſted both with ſowre and ſweet. This is one of the Race of the churliſh Fool *Nabal*, of whom we read that he was ſuch a Son of *Belial*, that he could not be ſpoke to.

And if he be deſirous of Revenge, how fearful is he to take it? And yet how impatient till it be had? And how reſtleſs when he hath it, for fear of a Retaliation?

And the Man of immoderate unreaſonable Deſires, is tormented before they are accom-

accomplished; and when they are, is unsatisfied and disappointed. The Sensualist his Expectations are great, his Enjoyments next to nothing, and both full of Trouble; the first of a Delay, the second of a Defeat.

The Ambitious Man is vex'd to the Soul, that others do not make that account of him that he doth of himself; that they do not esteem him as much as he would have them, much more perhaps than he doth deserve, and many times, than he knows he deserves. Tho some, tho many honour him, if any one cast a slight on him, he cannot bear it. This great little Man, that is so big in Conceit, and so small in Truth; so little in other Mens Opinions, and so great in his own, can never be at rest, because there can be no agreement betwixt his Thoughts and Things, betwixt his and other Men. He doth not think of himself as he is, nor will others think as he doth: He can never have his Wishes, and his Desires are impossible, and can never be accomplished.

And the same or greater is the Trouble of the Covetous; that poor rich Man is in perpetual Disquiet. He is infinitely sollicitous to get, and as anxious to keep. He is anxious to have, and fearful to lose; and being rack'd betwixt Desire and Fear, he enjoys nothing. He seeks for Riches, when he hath them; and seeks endlesly, because tho he finds what he sought, he knows it not; nor doth he think himself rich, tho he

he be. And 'tis all one as to Enjoyment, whether a Man have a ſmall Eſtate, or a poor Mind; whether he be poor, or conceit he is ſo: therefore is it, that he hath, and hath not; that he wants what he hath.

Thus is he diſtracted betwixt getting and keeping. And certainly infinite are the Cares and Anxieties that diſquiet theſe Two-penny Souls. 1 Tim. 6. 10. *For the Love of Money is the Root of all Evil, which while ſome have coveted after, they have erred from the Faith, and pierced themſelves through with many Sorrows;* περιέπειραν, *tranſfixerunt.* And are not theſe three the great Incendiaries of the World, and the Troublers of our Peace, both within and without?

But laſtly; The Remorſe and Anguiſh that ariſes from Conſcience of Sin, when they have at any time been tranſported by the Rage of Anger, or Madneſs, or Envy, or by unſatiable Deſires of Eſteem, or Wealth, or Pleaſure, ſo as to imbrue their hands in the Blood of ſome harmleſs *Abel* or *Uriah*, or take away honeſt *Naboth*'s Vineyard: When they have maliciouſly belied a blameleſs *Joſeph*, or ſome way or other have irreparably and undeſervedly injured their innocent Neighbour; then is it that they feel the ſharp Stings of an unquiet Conſcience; then are they frighted with Ghoſts and Spectres, and laſh'd with Furies, and gaſh'd with the deep Wounds of ſelf-accuſing Thoughts.

And theſe are certainly the moſt inward and piercing, the moſt inſupportable of all the

the Sorrows of which the Mind of Man is capable.

Now let us see what an Antidote universal Good-will is, to preserve us from these that are the worst of Diseases. *Charity*, saith the Apostle, *envies not*; it is not troubled that Men are so well, but desirous they should be better and happier than they are. And the Reason of this follows; for 'tis said, *She seeks not her own*; that is, not only, nor chiefly, nor in opposition to the Concerns of all others. The charitable Man will take care to be innocent; none shall ever be wrong'd by him, nor shall any suffer, or be worse by what he doth, where that is not necessary to publick Good.

Nor, secondly, doth he in the first place intend himself; nor doth his own single Interest, in his Esteem, outweigh the Concerns of many, but he always gives the Verdict for the Community, against a private, tho it be his own Interest.

Nor, thirdly, doth he much less only and wholly design himself; he knows not how to confine his Thoughts and Desires to so narrow a Compass, but his Goodness hath enlarged his Soul, and stretch'd it forth as far as there is any Being. And where Love hath taken possession of any Man, it constrains him to wish well, and *do Good to All*; so that where this Plant of God's planting grows, those Roots of Bitterness, Envy and Malice, are pluck'd up, and cast out.

Where

Where this Divine Temper of Benignity and Beneficence is, Envy and Malice can have no place. Where a Man is ſo outed of himſelf, and all particular and private Affections and Reſpects are brought into due Order, and a fit Compliance with the more publick and univerſal; there is no Foundation for envious Diſcontents, or malicious Purpoſes.

When this Spirit and Power of the bleſſed Jeſus, the Son of God, appears, thoſe Furies and Fiends, thoſe evil Spirits vaniſh, and flie away, as the Shadows of the Night do before the Brightneſs of the Sun.

Anger, tho it may ſometimes by ſurprize enter into the loving Soul, yet it cannot ſtay there. This mighty Power of God, the Spirit of Benignity, commands theſe Winds and Storms, and bids them obey, and they are quickly calm and ſtill, and the Face of the Soul is preſently ſmooth and clear again. This Cordial ſoon allays the Feveriſh Heats of that Paſſion, and quenches the Violence of a *Fire*, that was kindled in *Hell*, and would conſume the World.

We read of ſome Evil-Spirits, that would caſt thoſe into the Fire that were poſſeſs'd of them: Such is Anger alſo; it caſts into the Fire, and makes them foam, and tears them in whom it is. But this *Power of God*, this great Love, caſts it out alſo. When *David, the Lover that's after God's own Heart*, plays on his Harp before *Saul*, the *Evil-Spirit will go from him*. Thus Goodneſs eaſeth the Soul of that Vexation which ariſes from Anger.

Besides; It suffers no plotting of Revenge, nor Contrivances of retaliating Evil for Evil; and so prevents some of the greatest and most violent Disturbances, which we are subject to.

And how accurately well doth it bound and moderate those Desires, which, when they are irregular, are the Causes of so great Disquiet? For, our Love to others, will make us desire their Honour, as well as our own. And where we love all, and have an Affection for the Publick, we shall desire no more than we deserve; we shall be unwilling that other Men should be so far imposed on, as to think us better than indeed we are. We cannot be so unjust, as to expect Reward without Merit, and Praise where it is not due.

Charity is not puffed up, 1 Cor. 13. 4. and therefore frees a Man's Mind from all the Tortures that ambitious Spirits lie under. This makes a Man not displeas'd that other Men are prais'd, and himself not; nay, tho they have more, and he less than deserved, yet he is very well satisfied, because his own, and the Approbation of a few competent Judges, is sufficient to support him: whereas Men of less Worth, have need of greater Applause to bear up their Minds, and to bring them into Request, and enable them to do Good.

And how perfectly doth this Principle subdue and regulate all the Appetites of corporeal Pleasure? He that is acted by universal Love, cannot go to a forbidden Bed,

Bed; for he will not draw one whom he loves into Sin; he will not deprive them of the lasting Pleasures of Innocence and Chastity. He will not violate the Orders of all the Civilized World, which have been from the beginning of Time, which for the sake of the Publick, for Posterity, as well as the present Generation, ought to be inviolably observed. He will not eat nor drink more than is good for him, as for other Reasons, so lest others should want that which is good for them.

Again; This universal Love, by engaging us to do all the Good we can, takes away all inordinate Love of Money. We shall not now desire more than we can and will use for the advantage of others, as well as our selves. And when it is thus with us, we shall not grasp at all we could get, and we shall use what we do get. And where we are thus minded, we have freed our selves from that infinite Carking and Anxiety, which an inordinate Desire of Riches causes.

Lastly; This will in many cases prevent the bittereſt Remorse for Sins, by preventing the Sins themselves, (as I have shewed.) For, the good Man will not be unjust or unfaithful, he cannot oppress or cozen, falsly or needlessly accuse, will not violate the Chastity, prejudice the Health, much less take away the Life of any: and thus secures himself from those Terrors of Conscience, which follow such Wickednesses.

And where we are ſurprized, and do unwillingly miſ-behave our ſelves towards God; if we be indeed charitable and loving towards Men, we can then pray that God would, and hope that he will *forgive us as we do them.*

Thus I have ſhewn how this univerſal Beneficence frees us from Trouble and Unquietneſs. And now I will briefly ſhew how it brings us Pleaſure as well as Quiet.

By Pleaſure I here underſtand that Joy which is caus'd in the Soul, by an Apprehenſion or Senſe of Good. Now, where this Principle is become natural to us, and we act from it, and according to it, it muſt neceſſarily be a Spring of Delight to us. How pleaſant and joyful muſt the Mind of that Man be, which is govern'd by an univerſal Love? As much Good as there is in the World, ſo much cauſe of Pleaſure is there to them. For,

1. He is ſet at Liberty from contracted Selfiſhneſs; every Man is now to him, as he is to himſelf, and other Mens Concerns are as his own: ſo that he now rejoyces in their Welfare, and is heartily glad at the Good which befals them. So much is his Joy greater now, than it was when he liv'd to himſelf; for then he was pleas'd with his own private Advantages, but perhaps repin'd, or at leaſt was unconcern'd at other Mens; whereas now he is delighted to ſee it go well with any Man in the World.

Thus

Thus he honeſtly and innocently enjoys the Good of others, without depriving them of any; gathers of the Honey-dew, without robbing the Flower of its own Sweetneſs. As much Good then as there is, and as he can ſee in the World (and there is very much, for *the Mercy of God is over all his Works*; and he that will conſider things, may diſcover it) ſo much cauſe of Gladneſs hath this good Man. And then,

2. The infinite Love and Goodneſs of God, is an inexhauſtible Fountain of Joy to the good Man: For, tho he ſees many things much amiſs, and a great deal of Evil in the World; tho he ſees poor Man at a great diſtance from his Happineſs, and *the whole World lying in Wickedneſs*: yet he alſo ſees infinite Goodneſs at work, and that it has done very much in order to Man's Happineſs; and doubts not but in ſome ways which he is ignorant of, all the ends of Divine Goodneſs will be accompliſh'd at laſt.

I have ſhewed before, that this Goodneſs of Temper helps us to an aſſured Knowledg of the Goodneſs of God. We may alſo refer the two fore-going Particulars to the Object of Benevolence. If there be ſo great Pleaſure in loving one or two, or a few, how great is that which ariſes from an univerſal Good-will, a Love to all Men?

Thirdly; The good Man hath Pleaſure as concerning himſelf, from his Beneficence to others: and it is ſuch a Pleaſure as hath many Advantages above moſt others. For,

1. As to its degree, it is both intenſe and exquiſite.

2. As to its kinds; it is both of Memory, Senſe and Hope, as it refers to Good paſt, preſent, and to come.

3. Its Original is from Man himſelf, in concurrence with God and Nature; and therefore it is both certain and near.

4. As to its Duration, it is both continued and laſting.

5. As to its Quality and Effects, it is abſolutely Good.

6. In reſpect of its Objects, it is largely extended and manifold.

1. The Pleaſure that ariſes from a Senſe of our Beneficence, is without any allay or mixture of Pain, and that which is ſo, is pure and in the higheſt degree.

This cannot be ſaid of moſt other Pleaſures, the Price of them is much abated, by the Pains that accompany them. The more corporeal and groſs they are, the more they have of this Dreſs. This is a Commendation that almoſt only belongs to the Pleaſure that ariſes from vertuous Practices; and yet not any, not all of the other Vertues, can afford ſo great a Delight as this, which is both a Complex of moſt of them, and the End and Conſummation of all. The reſt are but mediate and ſubordinate Vertues, this is ultimate and final.

When a Man is in the exerciſe of univerſal Love, of Charity and Good-will, he

is

is as good, and as great and happy as he can be, then is all finiſhed.

The greateſt Pleaſure is in Love: Now when Love is univerſal, and in exerciſe, Pleaſure keeps proportion with it, and is as great as it can be; for it is as large as its Object, and therefore the Pleaſure that ariſes from it muſt needs be very great.

The beſt Faculty is now exerciſed about its proper Object; and 'tis generally ſaid, that all Pleaſure conſiſts in the Congruity of the Object and Faculty.

2. Diſtinguiſh this Pleaſure according to the three Differences of Time which its Cauſe hath, and we ſhall find it in all theſe to be extraordinary.

(1.) For the paſt. Memory, tho it be but a languiſhing Senſe, and the *Ideas* are not near ſo lively as when they were firſt impreſt; yet the Remembrance of having done good Offices, gives a very ſenſible and lively Pleaſure; and it is a great Content to the Soul, when it calls to mind any Acts of Beneficence, and that it did ſuch Actions for which others were the better.

To remember that I have relieved a Man in his Neceſſities, or added to his Conveniencies, eas'd his Pain, or cured his Diſeaſe, vindicated his Reputation, preſerved his Life, inſtructed his Ignorance, removed his Miſtakes, ſatisfied his Doubts, confirmed his Reſolutions, moderated his Affections; the Remembrance of this, that I have been inſtrumental in ſuch good Offices, will be very pleaſant,

Indeed a Man is more pleased with a Remembrance of the Good he hath done to others, than of that which he hath done himself.

And I am well assured, that when we come to die, it will be a very great satisfaction, if we can think that none can accuse us for doing them Injury, and if others will testify that we have been kind and good to them.

(2.) As to the Present. A Man that is in the Exercise of Goodness, hath the pleasant Sensation of the Health and good Plight of his Soul. He feels himself, his Mind as well as Body, in an excellent State. Some think, that Sense of Health is the greatest Pleasure of Man; and this is the Pleasure of a double Health.

(3.) Future. He that feels he hath attained to so much, cannot but hope that what is yet behind shall be added; and that he shall continue in those ways to the end, which are so infinitely pleasant to him; that he shall ascend to that Heaven, which is come down to him, and is in him; that is, that he shall continue the Exercise of that Love in Eternity, which he hath begun in Time. And this he hopes for, because it is very natural, and because this Sense of the Excellency of his own Goodness and Benignity, assures him that God is good, and will do good to them that are so.

3. When Man complies with the grand Design of Heaven, *i. e.* to promote the Happiness of Mankind, and co-operates with

with natural Causes, which have a manifest subserviency to the Good of the Generality, he is then doing Acts of Kindness and Benignity; and when he doth these, he not only refreshes other Men, but lets in Streams of Pleasure to his own Soul.

And these Pleasures which derive from such a Spring, must be,

(1.) Sure; for they depend on very certain Causes, and such as act naturally, and almost necessarily. All the Uncertainty arises from his own Mutability; and yet he is under an Engagement, that is as powerful to determine him as the Nature of Man is capable of; that is, he perceives a great and sensible Pleasure in the Exercise of Goodness, and either this will determine him to such Acts, or nothing can. Whilst Man perseveres in doing Good, his Pleasure must remain; and he will persevere, whilst he considers God and the World, *i. e.* whilst he uses his Reason.

(2.) Near. They are in and from himself, and do not so much depend on Things without us, but on the Use of our selves Principally. They are always with us; if we do but reflect on our own Acts, (which we cannot chuse but do) we shall not fail of Pleasure.

4. By reason of its Duration. It is, 1. Continued; 2. Lasting.

(1.) A Pleasure that arises from such certain Causes, and that are so near to us, must needs be continual, and without interruption.

ruption. That which is near and within a Man, must certainly be more taken notice of, than things at a distance; such are his own Actions, and the Principles of them; he cannot chuse but he must observe them. And as often as he is conscious of this beneficent Temper, and Acts of Goodness and Kindness, he feels an overflowing Joy in his Mind. And if that be his Nature to incline him alway to do Good, he must alway be sensible of it, that is, his Pleasure must be as interrupted as any thing can be in the Mind of Man.

(2.) It is also lasting. As long as the Sun is, the Rays will flow from it; and as long as the Soul continues benign and good, and acts from this Principle, so long will it continue in this pleasant Sense; for, this is an inseparable Emanation or Property of a benign Soul.

Other Pleasures that depend on contingent, mutable, external Things, must be transient and fleeting, and as full of Vicissitude, as the Causes on which they depend: but these, which flow from that which is incorporeal and incorruptible, will themselves last for ever. As long as the Fountain springs, these Streams will not fail: and that will not be dried up, for it is fed by the secret Aids sent from the inexhaustible Ocean of Goodness in God. And will certainly be one of the great Pleasures of the other State; for the Soul must lose it self, must cease to be what now it is, before this Pleasure can cease. It is one of the greatest and fairest

fairest of those Rivers of Pleasure which encompass Paradise, whose Waters fail not. How unconceivable is the Delight of Souls, when they are bathing themselves in these Streams? when they are carried on with the greatest Gales of Good-will to all their Fellow-Creatures? How will they be ravish'd with their own Countenance, when they behold in it this excellent Grace with which Love hath beautified it? How must they be delighted to feel themselves in so good a State, in so healthful a Plight?

5. This Pleasure is absolutely good. There are some Pleasures that are hurtful. The Soul may too much be taken with low and sensual Delights, so as to neglect those that are higher and better. There are Pleasures of Sin, that are Baits to catch unwary Souls, and will ensnare them in those Practices which will make them miserable.

But behold, the Pleasures which arise from Beneficence are absolutely good, have no mixture of evil, are perfectly innocent, and greatly useful, do no harm, and much good; for they engage us to repeat those good Works, which bring us in so great an Income of Bliss. Thus they continue themselves, and that is the greatest thing I can say of them; for this is that which hath not the Goodness of Means only, but of the End also.

Thus I have shewn how certain a Cause of greatest and most exquisite Pleasure, doing Good must needs be; so as I might hope

hope to engage the greateſt Epicureans to take this Courſe to be happy.

And now after all this, I dare encounter the Senſualiſt, who ſeeks for Delight from brutiſh Gratifications; or the malicious angry Man, who expects to have it from Revenge; or the ſelfiſh and contracted Man, who purſues it in ways of Self-love, and all the Pleaſure he hath is in doing Good to himſelf. To all theſe I can ſhew greater and better, purer and more laſting Pleaſures, in the Exerciſe of an univerſal Love. Here's Pleaſure that will be conſtantly freſh and new, no ſatiety, no clogging.

The Senſualiſt hath the pleaſure of a Brute in his Enjoyments; the malicious Man hath the pleaſure of Divels; the ſelfiſh, of the Sons of Earth: but the Man of Benignity and unbounded Love, hath the delight of thoſe that are Heaven-born, the Joys of Angels, and partakes of the greateſt Pleaſure of God himſelf, for that undoubtedly is to *do good*.

I have now ſhewn how much the temper and practice of univerſal Goodneſs tends to make us Knowing, Religious, Vertuous, Quiet and Joyful; which are the greateſt and moſt deſirable Perfections of the Soul of Man. But perhaps ſome may ſet a greater value on things leſs excellent, and will be more ſenſible of what concerns their Body, than their Mind, and of that which is without, than that which is within them. Now therefore that I may engage ſuch Men alſo, if it be poſſible, to a Life of Beneficence,

cence, and that I may fully discover the manifold Vertues of a benign Nature and Life; I will consider those also that are of less Importance, which relate to our Body, and Good-name, and Estate, but yet ought to have some place in our account. And lastly, how Instrumental this must be to begin, and continue, and confirm Friendships, which in all these, and the other respects before-mentioned, are hugely serviceable to us.

1. Universal Beneficence conduces to long Life. *Psal.* 34. 12. *David* asks this Question; *What Man is he that desires Life, and loves Days that he may see Good?* Not that he thought there were any that did not; but therefore he proposes this in form of Question, the better to excite their attention, and to make us all regard what he would say: which is to direct us what Course to take, that we may attain our desire, and that is, 1. *Keep thy Tongue from Evil, and thy Lips from speaking Guile.* 2. *Depart from Evil, and do Good; seek Peace, and pursue it.*

This is the Direction the Scripture gives to preserve Life, and we find this very passage cited in 1 *Pet.* 3. 10. And that we may be assured, that by doing Good is meant Beneficence, see how it is brought in there as an Argument against *rendring Evil for Evil*, at the 9th Verse, *Not rendring Evil for Evil, nor Railing for Railing, but contrariwise Blessing*, &c. and then follows at the tenth Verse. *For he that will love Life, and see good Days*, &c.

Reason

Reaſon and Experience will ſay the ſame. There are, we all know, two ſorts of Enemies to Mans Life, one is within, the other without him. Thoſe within are the Diſeaſes, which as they ariſe from other cauſes, ſo very often (I know not whether I ſhould ſay for the moſt part) ariſe from diſorderly Paſſions.

I know not any better general Preſcription for the preventing or curing thoſe Diſeaſes, that ariſe from ill temper of the Blood and other Humours, than to keep the Mind in a benign diſpoſition and willingneſs to do good Offices: For there is a great Sympathy betwixt Soul and Body; and experience and obſervation, ſhews us, that when the Soul is thus affected, it gives and continues alacrity and briskneſs to thoſe motions, in which both Life and Health conſiſt.

And for thoſe that ariſe from Paſſions, which are contrary to this univerſal good Affection, or proceed from want of it: ſuch as Anger, Malice, Envy, great Sorrow, and exceſs of Self-love, or a too particular and contracted Affection; what ill effects theſe have on our Bodies, and what Diſtempers they cauſe, I leave it to Obſervation and Senſe to teſtifie.

But we are ſure that thoſe ſudden changes of Colour, trembling of the Fleſh, palpitation of the Heart, ſtopping of the Breath, Sighing, Inflaming our Heavineſs, diſtorting of the Face and Eyes, which are ſo often conſequent on thoſe, are very ill Symptoms.

Symptoms. And the beſt way to prevent them, and all the dangers they threaten us with, is to preſerve in our Minds an Inclination to do good univerſally. For this will extirpate Malice, and deſtroy Envy; it will moderate Anger, and not ſuffer us to be Peeviſh; it will ſet us at liberty from a too particular Affection, and eaſe our Griefs, and thus prevent very many of thoſe Diſeaſes, which we lie under for want of due regulating our Paſſions.

Nor will this ſeem ſtrange, if we conſider that Phyſicians, when they adviſe a Method for preſerving Health, caution us about our Paſſions, that they be kept in order. I have before ſhewn, that to be univerſally Benevolent, is the beſt, and perhaps only way to govern them: and if ſo, 'tis evident that it muſt have a great Influence on Life, and that which is the Life of Life, without which Death would be more eligible, Health.

The cauſes of Man's Death that are without him, are Men, or other things, ſuch as infectious Vapours in the Air, Famines, the ill Qualities of his Food, or other ſuch like.

As for Men, *Tully* tells us, it was the Opinion of one *Dicæarchus*, that many more were ſlain by Men, than died by Diſeaſes, or any other way. The truth of my Diſcourſe depends not on the certainty of his Conjecture: all that I ſhall infer is, that thoſe great numbers that die by the hands of Men, and before their time come, by this means

means might have had their Lives lengthened. For, if the Law of Universal Love were observed by all, then Quarrels and Contentions, War and Fighting, Stabbing and Poyson would have no place.

But there is no better Preservative against infectious Diseases, than the Vertue and good Disposition of the Mind, of which the Sum is *Benignity*. Therefore Histories tell us, that in that lamentable Plague at *Athens*, which was so contagious and mortal, yet *Socrates* escaped, and this was ascribed to his Vertue, and excellent Disposition in general, particularly to his Temperance, which I have shewn how it, as well as all other Vertues, derives from Universal Love.

One observation will very much assure us of the Truth of what I have said, wherein I will appeal to the experience of every one; it is this, That an unwillingness to be doing Good, is for the most part, if not always, accompanied with indisposition of Body; and that when we enjoy the best Health, we commonly feel our selves in the greatest disposition to Beneficence. For the Soul and Body, as in other matters, so here, mutually operate on each other.

Whence I infer, That as Benignity and Goodness in the Mind, contribute to the Health of the Body; so the good plight of the Body, inclines the Soul to Good-will.

And for the other Perfections of the Body, this temper is not unserviceable to them: for, where it is, it gives a Pleasantness to the Countenance, which no Power

of

of Art can equal. There is a conſtant cheerful Air in the Face of that Man, in whoſe Heart is the Law of Kindneſs, which far exceeds the Beauty of borrowed Colours, or forc'd and counterfeit Smiles.

And for Strength, this Diſpoſition both gives and continues it. For, tho' ſome other Paſſions make Men more violent, and impetuous in their aſſaults; yet not ſo conſtant and durable as this affection. And if this Man ſhould not always ſo well aſſault an Enemy, yet he will better defend himſelf or Friend, than the Boiſterous, Angry or Malicious Man.

And laſtly, which is the very uſe of it, and (that for which it was deſigned) the Body is never ſo ſerviceable to the Mind, as when the Soul is acted by Love and Good-will, for then it is moderately active: So that the Soul needs neither reſtrain nor put it forward; whereas in other caſes, the Body is either dull and ſluggiſh, or elſe tranſported with ſo great a Violence, that the Soul cannot regulate its Motions.

2. As to our good Name, this can be no way ſo advanced as by univerſal Beneficence. Nothing ſo honourable to a Man, as to be a Benefactor. This alone will give him a good, and great, and laſting Reputation, when nothing without it can make him truly Honourable. This is that Ointment which embalms a Name to Poſterity, and makes the Memory of the Good-man freſh and ſweet, many thouſands of Years after Worms have devoured his Body, and

a Prodigal fooliſh Son ſpent his Eſtate.

This Univerſal Benefactor is every where extoll'd and prais'd. When the Ear hears him, it bleſſes him; and when the Eye ſees him, it gives witneſs to him; the young Men hide themſelves when they ſee him, and the Aged riſe up to do him Reverence, as *Job* ſpeaks *Ch.* 29. Verſ. 8. And why all this? Becauſe, ſays he, I delivered the Poor that cryed, the Fatherleſs, and him that had no helper: therefore the Bleſſing of him that was ready to periſh came upon me.

Was not this it which deified ſo many amongſt the Heathens, and procured them a Divine Worſhip after they left this Earth, that by their uſeful Inventions and brave Deeds they had been Benefactors to Mankind? Was it not on this account that *Bacchus* and *Ceres*, *Minerva* and *Hercules*, and divers others amongſt them, were eſteemed Gods? which Practice of theirs, how vain ſoever, yet affords us this Obſervation, that to be uſeful to Men, to be a Benefactor to the World is in the Eſteem of Mankind a moſt Divine and God-like quality, and therefore moſt highly Honourable.

For the further eviction of this: Suppoſe a Man endowed with the Gifts of Nature, and bleſt with the Goods of Fortune, and ſtrict in all Religious Obſervances, nay, and punctual in all matters of Juſtice: yet if he be not beneficent and a good Man, one that is benign and loving to others, and doth

doth the friendly Offices within his Power, he falls short of that Praise, which this one single quality will extort from all that see it.

He that hath a great Estate, but not an Heart to use it; hath abundance of Wealth, and perhaps himself, but none else is the better for it. He will neither give to those that want, nor lend to those that would borrow; is not kind to Neighbours, nor hospitable to Strangers; racks his Tenants, is unequal to his Servants, and unnatural to his Children; he is so far from being loved and honoured, that he is hated and scorn'd, and the Object of every ones Indignation.

Common observation tells us, that 'tis not having much, but the using what we have, whether much or little, well, which makes us Honourable.

Search the Records of Antiquity, and see if great Possessions alone ever made their Owners valued whilst they liv'd, or lamented when they died, or honoured by Posterity.

The same is true of Power, and Interest, and great Places, which are instrumental to our Honour no other way, than as they give us opportunities of doing good Offices. For if we through selfishness, or fear and littleness of Mind, or Idleness, neglect them, and do not do the Good we might, we become infamous, and stand like a Hollow-Tree in an Orchard, that neither yields Fruit nor Shadow, nor is of any use, but

only cumbers the Ground, and only takes up the room where another and better might grow.

The Potent Man that doth ill to all, yet in ſome reſpect hath more of Honour than he that doth good to none: for he, tho he be not lov'd, is fear'd, which argues he's conſidered; but this Man is ſlighted and contemned: The other hath ſomething of Courage in daring to do ill, but this is a puſillanimous Sneak. And 'tis ſuppoſed that he who is afraid to do Good, would do Ill, if he durſt: and that it is the ſame Cowardiſe which keeps him from doing ill Offices, that keeps him from doing Good: ſo that it is not his want of an ill Mind, but of a ſtout Heart, that makes him he is not miſchievous to all, who is beneficial to none, when he wants not Opportunity.

So far is Power and Intereſt from making a Man Honorable, that if it be not in Conjunction with Benevolence; if it either ſerves the deſigns of Malice, or be not inſtrumental to Good-will, it will be his Reproach and Infamy.

Farther; Suppoſe a Man rich with Natures Gifts; let him have a quick and clear Apprehenſion, a faithful Memory, a piercing Judgment, a ſubtil Reaſon, a fine Fancy, a nimble Wit, penetrating Sagacity; ſuppoſe him alſo to have attain'd great Learning, that he is a Critick in the Tongues, and very skilful and knowing in all the Arts and Sciences. Wee'l ſuppoſe him alſo by the experience he hath had, and obſerva-

obſervations he hath made, to have a deep inſight into the management of Affairs, ſo that he is qualified to give Counſel to a Prince. Let him alſo be as well able to ſpeak as he is to think, and have a free and full Expreſſion, and an eaſy Eloquence.

Suppoſe a Man thus accompliſhed by God and Nature, and his own Induſtry; yet if all theſe Perfections be acted by Malice and ill Nature, they make their Owner miſchievous; if not animated by Love and Benignity, uſeleſs. And whoſoever is either not uſeful, or pernicious and hurtful, cannot be Honourable.

We hate or fear the Miſchievous, and we ſcorn the uſeleſs Man, but honour neither. The Man of deſigns and contrivance, and ſubtil devices, if he be malicious, we fear and flee from him.

The Sons of Knowledg, if they keep it all to themſelves, and will not communicate, we account them uſeleſs and inſignificant. If they vaunt it out of Oſtentation, and upbraid thoſe that have not had the opportunity to ſtudy which themſelves have, we juſtly cenſure them for proud Pedants. Theſe endowments or acquirements will not of themſelves entitle a Man to Honour. It is a benign Diſpoſition, which will uſe them well and to good purpoſes, that makes them commendable, and the Objects of our Praiſe.

Proceed we farther to a Devotional Temper, that ingageth us to be ſtrict in Religious Performances. And that hugely be-

comes Man, to be hearty, and ſolemn, and conſtant in the Worſhip of God. Yet even this will not procure us Honour, if not accompanied with Beneficence, and attended by good Works. For, tho' a Man ſequeſter hours and days for Praying and Faſting; tho' he ſpend much time in Reading and Contemplation; tho' he be conſtant at Church, and much in his Cloſet; tho' he miſs not Prayers twice a day, nor Faſting twice a week; tho he faſt as often, and pray as long as the devout *Phariſees*, yet if, like them, he *devour Widows Houſes*, and eat the Bread of Orphans; tho' he *tithe Mint and Cummin*, yet if he *paſs over Truth, and Judgment, and Mercy*; if he that is thus devout towards God, be unjuſt, or but unkind and uncharitable to Men, we look on him as an Impoſtor and a Cheat, we conclude his Devotions to be animal and formal, and his Religion falſe, the Religion of the *Phariſees*, but not that which he taught, who as he went up into the *Mountain* to pray, ſo he *went about doing Good*.

We read of *Moſes*, when he came down from the Preſence of God, *his Face ſhone*. And we all expect, that Humility and Modeſty, that Benignity and Goodneſs ſhould appear in the looks and carriages of thoſe that have been in Converſe with God; That they who have beheld the Glory of God, and confeſs'd their own Vileneſs, who have praiſed and ſought his Goodneſs and Mercy, ſhould themſelves be meek and lowly, compaſſionate and forbearing to their Fellow-Creatures. If

If they be otherwiſe, if mercileſs and cruel, if peeviſh and froward, if clamorous and unquiet, if revengeful and malicious, if inhumane and uncivil; we then think that they do not in good earneſt praiſe that in God, which themſelves do not imitate; nor that they think themſelves to need Mercy, who will not ſhew it to others. For, it is the Sence of all Men, that he who is truly Religious, who worſhips God as he ought, will alſo do good to Men. Therefore let all ſhew the Truth of their Devotion, by the benignity of their Temper, and the goodneſs of their Lives.

Thus we ſee Religion will not avail to Honour, if ſeparate from Beneficence and doing Good.

Nay, even Juſtice it ſelf (tho' nothing can be commendable without it, tho' it lay the Foundation of Praiſe) yet if not in conjunction with Benignity, it is not ſufficient to entitle a Man to the name of *Juſt*. He doth Good as far as the Law requires, but no further; And ſo we know not whether his Good Works proceed from Nature and Temper, or from external Motives; whether from Love and a benign diſpoſition, or from Fear, and becauſe he dares not diſobey publick Sanction. For many Mens Juſtice is to be reſolved into their Fear, and neither their Wiſdom, nor their Choice.

Beſides; if Juſtice be not directed and regulated by Goodneſs, there is no place for Equity; and that is Juſtice in name only, but not in reality, which is parted from Equity.

In ſum, It is Benignity and Godneſs that keeps Juſtice from degenerating into Sowrneſs and Severity, into an inflexible Obſtinacy, a rigid adherence to Letters and Apexes, to Punctilio's, and Forms and Rules, indeed from becoming the higheſt Injuſtice.

Thus that Juſtice which is ſo eſſential to all honourable Actions, is beholden to Benignity, both for its being, and for its name.

And now I have ſhewed, that thoſe qualities, which when they are inſtrumental to Beneficence, ſo much commend a Man, when they are either not uſed, or to ill purpoſes, they are either matter of Reproach, or add nothing to his Honour.

I will conclude this Particular with this ſhort Appeal. Suppoſe, on the other ſide, a good-natur'd beneficent Man, ſtript of moſt of thoſe natural and acquired Perfections and Endowments; he hath little, but uſes and doth good with that he hath; his Underſtanding is not encreaſed by Learning, nor hath he had much opportunity to improve it by general Obſervations; but the Knowledge he hath, he imparts, and will not fail, where he can, to counſel thoſe that want it; he can give little Alms, but he throws in his Mites, all he can ſpare, and ſuch as he hath, his Pains, he will freely beſtow.

His Devotions are not pompous, nor ſolemn, nor long; he cannot ſet apart hours for Prayer; but all his time is ſpent in doing

doing the Good that is within his Sphere. Tho' his Goodneſs reach not to God in Heaven; yet it doth to his Creatures.

He is poor in Eſtate, but rich in good works; is in low place, and hath ſmall Power, but great Good-will: is ignorant in many, and miſtakes in divers matters, but is malicious to none; for tho his Knowledg is bounded, his Charity is unconfined.

His Addreſſes to God are not taken notice of, but his Viſits to his poor Neighbours cannot be hid.

In ſhort; he that hurts none, and does Good to all; and if he do not do Good, it is for want of Power and Skill, not of Inclination; this Man is lov'd and valued, honoured whilſt he lives, and after death is remembred and praiſed. Whereas the proud and uſeleſs Pedant, the Rich, but Covetous Miſer, the Man of great place, that uſed his Power to do Evil, or did not uſe it in doing good Offices, their names ſhall be forgot, or remembred with ſcorn and infamy.

Here then is the only way to Honour, to be Beneficent. Would we be eſteem'd whilſt we live, and paiſed when we dye? let us do Good. Let our own Works praiſe us, and then Men will not be ſilent.

The Univerſal Benefactor, as his name is written in Heaven, ſo it ſhall be regiſtred in the Rolls of Fame here on Earth, and both the preſent and future Ages will call him Bleſſed.

3. I will endeavour to ſhew, that to do Good, is the way to make us Rich.

There are too many in the World, who think that Man's *Life conſiſts in the abundance of the things he poſſeſſes.* To be Rich, is in their account the chief Good, and the greateſt, if not only Happineſs. The Objection which they have againſt doing Good, is yet unremoved: This they fear, is an expenſive practice, and will waſte their Eſtate; for Beneficence cannot conſiſt with Injuſtice, with Fraud or Oppreſſion, with pinching and ſcraping, and all the ſinful, little ſordid Arts they have uſed to make themſelves Rich.

I do not now go about to ſhew them the unreaſonableneſs of their deſires; but ſuppoſing Riches to be as good as they imagine, I will endeavour to make it out, that to do Good is the wiſeſt and likelieſt means to attain them, it is a very probable way to thrive.

This is a Paradox, and therefore I will make it out, 1. by the beſt Teſtimony, 2. by Obſervation. 3. by Argument.

1. By Teſtimony. *Prov.* 19. 17. *He that giveth to the Poor, lendeth to the Lord, and that which he giveth will he pay him again.* God is a ſure Pay-maſter: but perhaps he may not pay in kind, tho' the words ſeem to import that he will. *Ch.* 11. Verſ. 24, 25. ſpeak this more clearly, and are full to our Purpoſe. *There is that ſcatters, and yet encreaſes; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to Poverty.*

The

The liberal Soul shall be made fat; and he that watereth, shall be watered also himself. In the 24th verse is a double Paradox, wholly contrary to the Sence of these Men. He tells them, that some scattering is the way to encrease, and some sparing the means to be Poor. And then in the 25th, he asserts, that Liberality, or a cheerful, free Communicativeness of what we have, shall be blest with Plenty.

2. By Observation. *Psal.* 37. 25, 26. *I have been young, and now am old, yet did I never see the Righteous forsaken, nor his Seed begging Bread, &c.* Both he and his Children have been kept from Poverty and Want; they have not been reduced to extremity. The words seem spoken by way of μείωσιν, for it follows his *Children are Blest.*

Another Observation is *Tullies.* He tells us, that the *Roman* Empire flourished and was great, whilst they obliged their Associates by Benefits, and their Senate was a Haven and Refuge to their Provincials: but when they became Injurious and Cruel, and had no regard to Strangers, they were quickly ruin'd. *In has clades incidimus*, saies he, *dum metui quam chari esse & diligi maluimus. Quæ si populo Romano injustè imperanti accidere potuerunt, quid debent putare singuli?* This is the Observation of this wise Man, that when they were good and beneficent to other Nations, they were prserved; when cruel, unequal and injurious, their Empire was destroyed.

Lastly,

Lastly; I appeal to your own Observation. Call to mind how many we have known, who have been Just and Charitable, Merciful and Liberal, and Hospitable, who have by these very means both got and secured their Estates: and how many Men have we known undone by their Malice, and Anger, and Envy? Nay, their very closeness and pinching have been the causes why they have not got more, or kept what they had. And,

3. The reason of this is plain. For,

1. By the good Offices we do to others, we engage them to Returns. Few Men are so depraved, but they are grateful, and will study retribution: and gratitude will not only pay back the Principal, but give us it with advantage. It constrains the Debtor to pay greater Use than the Law will force from him. *Whatsoever you would that Men should do to you, do you do to them*, is a truth that's written in Nature, as well as Scripture. Here's a Direction to us in our Converse, whatever dealing we desire from others, we must use to them: and it supposes, that as we do to them, they will do to us: which is for the most part true: for, they lie under the double Obligation of Justice, and an Example, and without great violence to themselves cannot shake it off. And therefore there is no such sign of a desperate Wickedness, as Ingratitude. If then we do good to others, we probably shall not fail of a return from them; and such a return ordinarily, as the Husband-man hath

hath of his Seed, Thirty, Sixty, or an Hundred fold.

2. All Men will love us, they will wish us well, and do us Good. The good, the beneficent Man hath every ones Prayers and good Desires, and every ones Endeavours for his Welfare: they all desire that he should be happy. No Man envies his good Fortune, who will use what he hath for the Good of others. None are afraid that he should grow Rich, who will not abuse his Wealth to crush and oppress, but uses it to relieve his poor Neighbours.

He is not the Object of any ones Indignation; for we all esteem the Man that doth Good with it, worthy of what he hath. Men only grudge them their Wealth, who have no Knowledge nor Will to use it.

Lastly, none will ordinarily hate or be malicious against the Good-man. *Who will, who can harm you, if you be doers of that which is Good?* By this means we are more secured from Enemies, than by Bars, and Locks, and Iron Doors, and Chests. Take away Envy and Malice, Fears and Jealousies, and we may dwell safely. Men can have little Temptation to rob us, when they and others are the better for what we have.

No, it's the selfish Man that catches what he can from others, and will part with nothing to them; that must fear that will be taken from him, which himself cannot find in his Heart to give, or lend, or lay out for a publick benefit. Whereas the liberal Man may

may lie down and sleep without fear. He needs not, he cannot much fear the Combinations of crafty Men, or the Assaults of the Violent;

But that's not all that doing Good contributes to an Estate; it doth not only keep what we have, but get more. It doth as well make Men that they shall be our Friends, as that they shall not be our Enemies. Our Neighbours will be ready to do us all kind Offices, and help our Business with Counsel, or Labour, or Money. And the good Man's Servants (on whose Trust and Diligence Estates much depend) will not work out of Fear, nor only out of Conscience, but out of Love; and this will make them more constant and chearful, and careful in their Master's Business, than any other Principle.

Neither he that works for Hire, or because he dare do no other, will be so diligent, as he that loves his Master. And if he be good, and kind, and equal, liberal and charitable, he will, he must love him.

I conclude this Particular with that of *Tully*; *Rerum omnium nec aptius est quicquam ad opes tuendas ac tenendas, quam diligi, nec alienius quam timeri. Quem metuunt oderunt, quem quisque odit perisse expetit. Multorum odiis nullae opes obsistere possunt.* There is nothing more fit and suitable to the keeping and securing of Riches, than to be lov'd; and nothing more strange and opposite, than to be fear'd. He that is fear'd, is hated withal, and every one desires the Ruine of him he hates. The greatest Wealth is not sufficient to give check to the Hatred of many.

3. This

3. This Beneficence of Temper will keep us from those Ways whereby Estates are usually wasted.

There are five Ways that lead Men to Poverty; 1. Idleness. 2. Prodigality. 3. A Sensual Course. 4. Gaming. 5. Law-Suits.

1. When Men will not be diligent. If their Business will do it self, it may; but by them it shall not be done. Now the Sluggard, that neglects his Field, suffers it to be overgrown with Thorns and Briars, what Crop, what Harvest can he expect? None at all; but as *Solomon* saith, *Want shall come on him suddenly, and Poverty as an armed Man.*

2. When a Man doth not give, but throw away; neither considers to whom nor why he gives, nor what he hath. He flatters away his Estate; he spends, meerly because he hath no power to keep. To avoid the Extreme of parting with Nothing, this lavishing Man parts with All.

3. *Solomon* and Experience say the same, That he who loves Pleasure shall be *a poor Man*; *He who loves Wine and Oil, shall not be rich.* The Sons of Appetite, if they be not born to Estates, never get them, and seldom keep what they have got to their hands. Certainly this is a great Waster. *By means of a Whorish Woman*, saith the Wise Man, *is a Man brought to a Piece of Bread.* Luxury and Incontinence, Gluttonny and Drunkenness, are very chargeable Sins. How many Men have eat and drunk up great Estates? And how many have sold their Lands, to make their Mistresses fine?

4. And

4. And who knows not how many have been undone by Gaming? have ventured and loſt great Eſtates, by truſting to their own Skill and Fortune?

5. And are there not many ruin'd by Law-Suits? They either are contentious, and ſue others, or unjuſt, and provoke others (that have no mind to it) to ſue them.

Now the beneficent good Man, he is out of danger of loſing his Eſtate in any of theſe Ways: For,

1. He cannot be idle and unactive. He will be labouring for this Reaſon, that he may have to give to him that wants. He will overlook his Affairs, and mind his Shop, or his Field, or where-ever his Employment is, becauſe this will enable him to do Good.

2. Tho he be liberal and charitable, yet not prodigal and profuſe. He will part with what he hath freely on a good account, but not on none at all. He is ſo bountiful, as to lay out whenſoever it becomes him; and yet is ſo frugal alſo, as to keep what he hath, when it doth not misbecome him.

3. He ſees how unprofitable it is to himſelf, to the World, to waſte away his Time and Subſtance in Eating and Drinking, or any other Senſuality. He finds theſe Courſes are miſchievous to him, and render him uſeleſs to other Men. Becauſe he is bent to do as much Good as he can, he will not riſe up early to drink ſtrong-Drink, nor continue at Night till Wine inflame him.

4. He loves himſelf too well to loſe, and his Neighbour too well to win an Eſtate at Cards

Cards or Dice. This good Man cannot be so foolish, as to run such a Hazard as this, to disable himself from doing that Good which he otherwise might, nor can he take any pleasure to undo his Neighbour.

5. This good Man will neither be so quarrelsom, as to contend with others where he hath not Right; nor yet so unjust, as by detaining their Rights to engage others to sue him. And when ever he is forced by the Injustice of others, he doth it more to vindicate Justice, and preserve those Rights which Custom, and the Wisdom of their Forefathers have settled, than upon any private particular Account.

4thly, The secret Blessing of God goes with the good Man; Providence will and doth concern it self, that such an one should not want the power to do Good, who hath such a mind to it.

It is by the secret Curse of God upon him, that the Covetous Man puts his Money into Bags with Holes. He puts it in, but never takes it out, never sees, never enjoys it. He gets, and loses what he has got. And it is the Blessing of God that makes the liberal Mans *Bread*, which he *casts upon the Waters*, (where it seems quite lost) *after many days to return to him again.*

He that takes care of others, God will take care of him; and if he lay aside his own private Concerns, to serve other Men, the *Angels of God will minister to him.*

Thus I have briefly, yet so plainly evinced, that to do Good is the way to be rich, that I

cannot but hope Covetousness it self will be engaged to Beneficence.

I now proceed to shew how much an universal Beneficence conduces to private and particular Friendships; and how much, if it obtain'd in the World, it would tend to Publick Peace.

1. A Friend is certainly the greatest of all external good Things. Nothing so profitable, nothing so pleasant, nothing so suitable to, and becoming a Man, as a Friend.

Nothing without him so much contributes to the attaining all his Ends. My Friend is my Riches, and my Reputation, my Life and Health, my Pleasure and Delight, my Understanding and Wisdom, the Guide and Conductor of my Life, the Governor of my Passions, he that moderates my Desires, and subdues mine Anger, and doubles my Joys; that excites all the good and useful, that restrains and quells the evil and pernicious Motions of my Mind.

My Friend doth me Good, when my self cannot; for, he rectifies my Mistakes, and allays my Griefs, and unburdens me of all the Loads, which mine own Folly and Melancholy would bind fast on. Thus he is better to me than my self, he is more than all the World besides; when I cannot help my self, and when others will not, he doth.

In sum, my Friend is to me both my self, and all the World, nay, my terrestrial visible God. I do with my Friend enjoy both Solitude and Company. When I converse with him, I have both the Secrecy of mine

own Breaſt, and the Eaſe and Freedom of Diſcourſe; I ſpeak, and yet have the Security of Silence. When I am with him, I am retir'd into mine own Thoughts, and can contemplate without diſturbance; and yet I feel the higheſt Pleaſure, and moſt raviſhing Delights, that the whole Frame of Nature can yield. The Glories of the Sun are not ſo pleaſant to behold, as the Face of my Friend; and the moſt melodious Muſick cannot be ſo grateful to my Ears, as the Voice of the Perſon who loves me, and whom I love. He is the *Epitome* of the whole World, and the livelieſt Image of God himſelf. He is God and Man in one Perſon, if I may ſo ſay; for he hath the Love and Goodneſs of God, an infinite Good-will, join'd with the Weakneſs and Impotency of Man.

I can ſcarce forbear to go on, and ſet forth the Excellency and Uſefulneſs of Friendſhip, which of all the things in the World, doth moſt conduce to both our ſpiritual and bodily Welfare, our preſent and future greateſt Happineſs.

But I have ſaid all this, only that I may the more commend this univerſal Goodneſs, which is the beſt, if not only Means to great and good Friendſhips. To do Good to him, is the Sign and Effect of my Love to another, and 'tis the ſure Cauſe of his Love to me; and where there is a mutual Love, it will not long be conceal'd; and where it is diſcovered, that is Friendſhip.

This therefore is the Way to make all Men

my Friends, to *do Good to All*; they cannot possibly hate their Benefactor. This is the way to extinguish all the Fires of Hatred, and Glowings of Jealousy, and Flames of Anger; to take away all those Passions, which are the Ingredients of Enmity. No such sure and effectual, as well as brave and generous Method to overcome Evil, and conquer Enmity, as that which the Apostle prescribes by *doing Good*.

But that's not all; This doth not only make it next to impossible for Men to be our Enemies, when they see we are doing Good to all, and to themselves, as far as that is consistent with the Publick Weal; but it also makes it necessary that they should be our Friends. So strong are the Obligations of the Laws of Gratitude, so powerful is Example, that they are constrained to make Returns of Good Offices, and to retaliate Kindness.

Herein lies the great Power that every Man hath to procure himself good Usage from other Men, by carrying himself well to them; for, 'tis impossible but they should love him, who loves them. And I look on it as the best and surest Rule to be observ'd by them that would be lov'd, to love.

I no less admire the Wisdom, than the Justice of that Saying, which hath found such an acceptance, that it hath sometimes been entertain'd in a great Court; *Whatsoever ye would that Men should do to you, the same do ye to them:* For they are not only obliged, but inclined to it; they ought to do it,

it, and probably they will: ſo that it is as full of Counſel, as it is of Equity, and doth as certainly ſhew us what we may expect from other Men, as it ſtrictly requires us what to do to them.

From this Diſcourſe is clear, That if we love, and do Good to all Men, all Men will love us, at leaſt it will be ſo with the Generality: And it is the likelieſt, and perhaps only Courſe we can take to engage all: for, if Kindneſs and Beneficence will not engage their Affections, nothing will.

Thus, by univerſal Beneficence we take the way to be not only univerſally well ſpoke of, and well thought of, but alſo well dealt with: for none can reſiſt the real Charms of this powerful Philter; they muſt love him that loves them, and do Good to their Benefactor.

That's the firſt Particular, That by doing Good to All, we ſhall procure an univerſal Friendſhip. There is a common Saying, *That an univerſal Lover is never a particular Friend:* That is not true; for our Saviour loved all, and yet had his particularly beloved Diſciple. But we muſt ſee that we do not verify that, That he who is every-body's Friend, is no-body's: Tho I believe, for the moſt part, they mean no more by that, than that he is not ſo much their Friend as they deſire; for they would monopolize and engroſs his Friendſhip.

2. This will make Friendſhips not only large, but hearty; as well intenſe in Quality, as extended to many: For, Men will

love us in that manner in which we love them. If our Love be only in Words and Countenance, they will return us good Looks and good Words again: But if we do not only love them *in Word and Tongue, but in Deed and Truth*, as St. *John* expreſſeth it, they will alſo love us heartily, and do us Good; for, *by the ſame meaſure we mete to them, it ſhall be meaſured to us by them again.*

And this is an excellent Effect of this univerſally beneficent Temper, to make us Friends to all in general, and hearty to every one in particular.

Men that are deſtitute of this Principle, their Love is like ſome Plants, that either all run up into the Root, or out into Leaf: Here is both Root and Leaf; their Love is hearty in particular, and yet dilated to the Community.

3. This makes Friendſhips vertuous and juſt. No Friendſhip can be good, nor I think great, I am ſure not certain, that is not founded in Vertue; that is the Parent, that is the Nurſe of true Friendſhip. This was obſerved by Heathens long ſince. And indeed I can neither expect that he ſhould do me the beſt Good, nor yet be faithful, who is not a Man of ſteady Vertue. And no Man can be my great Friend, who cannot promote my beſt Intereſts, or whom I cannot truſt.

Now how neceſſary univerſal Good-will is to the Vertue of Friendſhip, to keep it within its due Bounds, will appear by what I am now to ſay.

Every

Every Man is to endeavour to put himself into that Condition, and those Circumstances, in which he shall do the most and the greatest Good; and whatever indispose's, disables, hinders him in that, that is evil to him, and makes him not vertuous.

The great Danger that a Soul void of universal Good-will, is exposed to by particular Friendships, is this, That it will be so confined and immured, so captivated and clogg'd, so restrain'd and enslaved to some one Person, that it cannot be at liberty to help and serve any others: and thus that Affection is monopoliz'd and engross'd betwixt two or three, which ought to be more common and publick.

In short, this Man loves his Friend, and none else; but where Good-will to all is, that keeps Friendship from degenerating into Partiality and Injustice.

For, tho this good Man loves his particular Friend, as much as he that loves none else; yet he will not be so kind to one, as to be unjust to the rest of Men. He may and doth prefer one before another, but yet hath not so much regard to one, that he hath none at all to others. He will and may spend most of his Time and Pains in doing Good there, where he hath greatest Obligations, and best Opportunity, and there is most need; but yet reserves some for others, for any in the World, to whom he can be serviceable.

In sum, whilst particular Friendship is no prejudice to Humanity, nor hinders us from

doing any more publick good Offices to others; whilſt it doth not take off our Affections from them, nor take up our Time, and employ us ſo, as we cannot ſerve the Community, it keeps within its own bounds.

The only way to keep it thus, is to be univerſally beneficent: Endeavour to get into our Souls a great Good-will to the whole World of Mankind, and then particular Friendſhips will never degenerate into too particular Affection; that will hold the Ballance even betwixt the Intereſt of other Men, and the Concerns of my Friend.

When there is a Fault in this particular, Friendſhip is not to be blamed, but the Man; nor doth he love his Friend too much, but other Men too little.

The way that is ordinarily taken to rectify this Miſcarriage, is wrong: for, when Men love their Friend leſs, they mend one Fault by another: The right Courſe is, to love others more, and not their Friend leſs; to do good to all Men, and not to ceaſe doing good to him.

4. This will make Friendſhips more eaſy and pleaſant than otherwiſe they would be: For he that loves but one or a few, in their abſence is hugely unquiet and troubled; but he that hath a kindneſs for all, he ever meets with the Objects that pleaſe him (tho not all alike) and when Neceſſity parts him from his deareſt Friend, yet he fails not of thoſe on whom he does exerciſe Benevolence, and ſo hath both a pleaſant and profitable Diverſion. And it will prove the beſt Remedy

medy against the Trouble of parting with Friends, when we are so affected, as to do to others (for substance) as we have done to our Friends.

5. This will also make Friendships profitable. When they grow on this Root, they will bring forth Fruit; when they derive from a Principle of Beneficence, they will not end in a fruitless Passion: But he that is upon doing Good to all Men, will certainly not fail to do it to his Friend; it will be his business to serve him in some or other of his Interests.

6. This is the only probable way to make Friendships lasting. This is a firm Foundation, and that Friendship which is built on it shall stand fast, tho the Winds blow, and Storms fall, and Waves beat upon it. When all others, that are founded only on particular Humors, or Likeness of bodily Temper, nay, on expectation of Advantages, either Pleasure or Profit, shall fall; this that is set on the Rock of universal Beneficence, shall continue for ever.

He that loves his Friend in prosecution of, and consistently with that great Principle of *Love to All*, he will love him to the *end*: Whereas he that is a Friend meerly from Humor or Temper, or sense of present Pleasure, or hope of some future Advantage, will cease to be a Friend, perhaps become an Enemy, when these change. Tempers alter, and Humors come and go, and whatever is corporeal, is mutable: Nay, Vice and Mistake are so too; so that we can be sure of no-

nothing so much as of Vertue and Knowledg

Nothing that is unaccountable, or that is founded in Mistake or Ignorance, can probably continue long; and such is that Friendship which is inconsistent, not in conjunction with, nor deriving from universal Good-will.

Thus I have shewn generally, what Advantages accrue to the Friendships of those Men, that live in the observance of this great Law of *doing Good to All Men*; for, by this means they are many and hearty, vertuous, and much more easy, and profitable, and lasting than otherwise.

I proceed, lastly, to shew how much the Temper and Practice of *Universal Beneficence* tends to *Publick Peace and Tranquillity*. How would most of the Quarrels in the World cease, if this once obtained? Men would quickly *beat their Swords into Plowshares, and their Spears into Pruning-hooks*; they would *unlearn War*, and betake themselves to the useful Arts of Peace; if they lov'd all Men, they would not then study how to *hurt* and *destroy*, but how to help and serve, and be beneficial to each other.

Let us imagine an *Utopia* on this Earth, where it is natural to the Inhabitants to obey this Law of *Love to Mankind*, how hardly do any Controversies arise amongst them? And how easily and quickly are they decided by the Parties themselves? For, they are not more their own, than they are one anothers Advocates. They consider not their own particular Interests, in opposition to

the

the Publick; and the Rules of Juſtice and Order, wherein the Community is ſo much concerned, out of their good-will to the World, they will not violate.

If any Caſe be ſo difficult that they cannot fathom it, or their own Modeſty make them think they do not; or that they may have more conſidered their own Cauſe than the oppoſite: how calmly, and with what quiet and compoſure do they ſubmit to a Determination by ſome other? with what indifferency do they hear it judged againſt them? Nay, they do not think that is againſt them, which is for Juſtice and other Men.

All their Contentions are friendly, and they are all in a way of Reaſon; for they are all of the mind, that of the two ways in which Men contend, one by Reaſon, the other by Force, the firſt only becomes Men, the latter belongs properly to Brutes.

And for a further Eviction of this, I do appeal to, and dare be concluded by almoſt any the moſt injudicious Men, whether if every Man were upon deſign of doing Good to others, to all, there would not be a perfect Peace over the whole Earth, and *Nation would not riſe againſt Nation*; much leſs would the ſame People fall out with each other.

If any doubt, let him ſearch the Records of Antiquity, and look back to the Hiſtories of ancient Times, or let him inform himſelf of his own, and he will very ſoon be ſatisfied, that Want of a regard to the Concerns of other Men, hath, and ever had the greateſt hand in the Breach of Peace.

The

The great Diſturbers of the Quiet of the World, have been either acted by Malice and Hatred, or by a ſelfiſh and contracted Affection, but have ever been deſtitute of Good-will to the Generality of Men. By all that we have recorded of the great Conquerors of the World, we find they were inſtigated to ſuch Undertakings, more by a deſire of Empire and Greatneſs, and to enthrone themſelves, than to be Benefactors to others. Certainly, if they had had a tenderneſs to the Welfare of other Men, they would never have ranſack'd the Goods, and razed the Dwellings, and ſhed the Blood of ſo many. But enough in a Caſe ſo plain.

I will only add, and with that will conclude this Particular, That the due Obſervance of this excellent Rule, is neceſſary to the right diſcharge of thoſe Employments, on which the *Publick Peace* ſo much depends, I mean, the *Magiſtracy* and the *Miniſtry*.

For the *Magiſtrate*, it is a neceſſary and excellent Qualification of him, both in his Legiſlative and Judicative Capacity.

How can he make Laws, that intends not the Good of all them that are Subjects, ſince this is eſſential to a Law, that it aim at the Publick Good? And how unfit is he to judg according to the Laws, who himſelf hath not the ſame deſign with them? He that is acted by Malice and bitter Anger, or that hath Love, but it is confined to a Number, to a Party, how ill is he qualified to be either a Lawgiver, or a Judg?

Plato

Plato, and *Tully* from him, tell us, That all Governors ought to observe two Precepts:

1. To intend and refer all to the Publick Good, subordinating all private Respects and particular Interests to that.

2. To have a regard of the whole Community, not of a part only. If we add to these two,

3. To take most care of the best, most vertuous and useful Men; we have comprized all that is in my Text: which whosoever observes, can scarce fail of being an excellent Magistrate, a wise and a good Lawgiver, a just and an equal Judg.

I say, he that constantly designs and prosecutes, not his own private Advantages, but the Publick Good; nor takes care of only one Party, but of all the Community; and, lastly, makes best Provision for the best Men, and doth most Good to them that do most Good: he will discharge his Office well; his Laws will be no tyrannical, or bitrary, unaccountable Impositions, but a gentle and easy Yoke; his Sentence will be equitable, and his Execution full of Mildness and Humanity.

And how little cause of Quarrels and Commotions there can be in a State, whose Governors are thus qualified, we all see. Thus is it where the *Magistrates* are bent on doing Good to all, especially to the Best and most Vertuous.

2. This Publick-spiritedness is no less necessary for *Ministers*, to engage them to that extraordinary Diligence they must use, to carry them through all the Opposition and Diffi-

Difficulties they ſhall certainly meet with in their general Converſe with all ſorts, with Men of the meaneſt Capacities, of loweſt Rank, and greateſt Vices, and worſt Natures.

Nothing but this Univerſal Benevolence can fit them for ſuch Converſe: Only he that loves all, will bear with ſuch Converſation as a Miniſter meets with.

All the Care and Pains he is at, firſt to find out good, and wholeſom, and fit Truths, and then to deliver them intelligibly and acceptably, muſt have their Riſe from his great Good-will to Men; and therefore he doth thus, becauſe he is on a deſign of doing Good to them.

Where the Miniſter is deſtitute of this good Temper, he is idle and careleſs, and his Diſcourſes uſeleſs and inſignificant: becauſe he is *without Charity*, he is a *ſounding Braſs, and tinkling Cymbal*, and his Carriage fooliſh and hurtful.

The great Work of Miniſters is to teach Religion, ſo as it may be both known and done, to make it eaſy to be underſtood, and eaſy to be practiſed, *&c.*

Thus I have endeavoured to make plain, that Univerſal Beneficence is both available and neceſſary to all the valuable Intereſts which Man can propoſe to himſelf, whether he regard the preſent or the future State; whether he conſider himſelf and his own particular State, or the Publick; whether he be in a private or a publick Capacity, he muſt ſtrictly obſerve this Rule of *doing Good to All.*

So

So that if we would be either good or happy in this World, or in that to come; if we would ſerve our ſelves or others; if we would pleaſe and honour our God and Saviour, adorn our Profeſſion; if we would have Pleaſure in Life, and Peace in, and Glory after Death; if we would do all we can to make others as good as we wiſh they were, we muſt herein exerciſe our ſelves, *to do all the Good we can to all.*

If any are idle, and would be doing nothing, I do aſſure them they ſhall have more pleaſure in this active Life than in Sleep and Dulneſs. If any love themſelves only, and do not regard how it goes with others, I do aſſure them that this is the beſt and likelieſt way to ſerve themſelves. As many as are of particular Affections, confined to Kindred, or a Party, or ſo; let them enlarge their Love to All, and they will proportionably increaſe their Pleaſure. And if any are malicious, and love to do Miſchief, I undertake to make it appear to them, that the Pleaſures of Love are far greater than thoſe of Revenge: And I entreat ſuch to leave off to lead the Life of Devils, and live that of Angels. If Heaven be more deſirable than Hell, it's better to love than to hate.

Conſider what has been ſaid; and God grant, that we may all in good earneſt ſet upon the Practice of that moſt excellent Duty to which we are exhorted.

And

And let the good Spirit of God inspire the whole World with that Goodness and Love to one another, and all Men, that so we may both live well here, and be happy for ever hereafter, for the sake of Jesus Christ.

Now to this Blessed Saviour, who hath loved us, and washed us in his own Blood, together with the Father, and the Holy Spirit, be eternally given all Honour, Praise, and Glory. *Amen.*

FINIS.

485. Aug. 85.

1. 85

175. 85

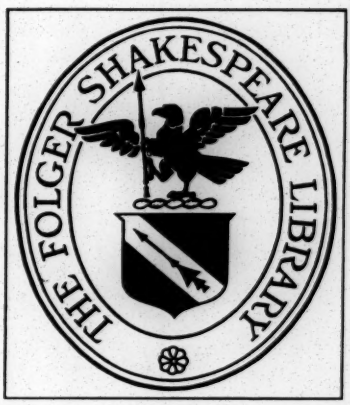
353 — 85

249 — 85

73 — 85

186687

B6178.2



K